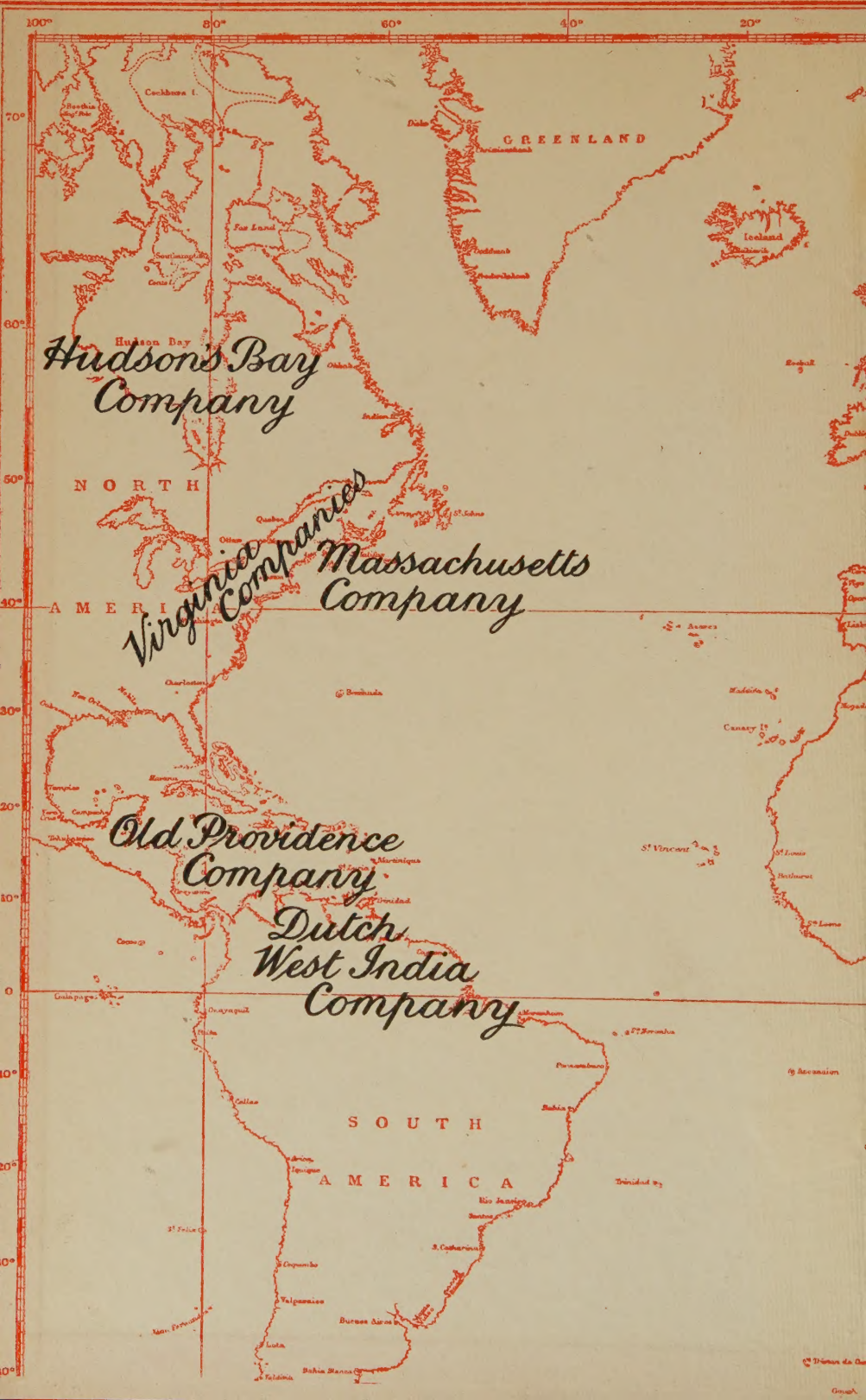


# THE GREAT CHARTERED COMPANIES

DAVID HANNAY



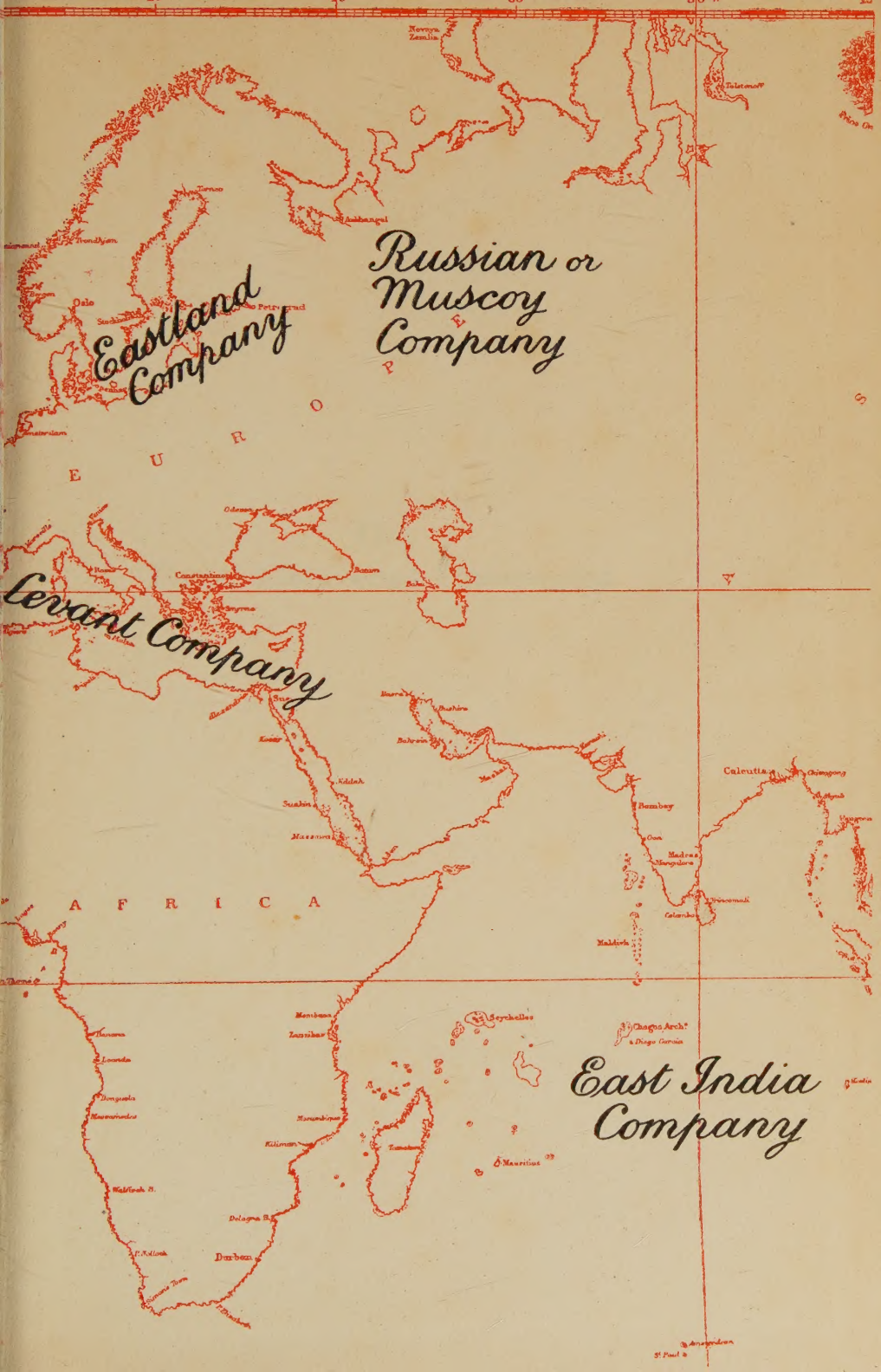
Hudson's Bay  
Company

Virginia Companies  
Massachusetts  
Company

Old Providence  
Company

Dutch  
West India  
Company





*Eastland  
Company*

*Russian or  
Muscovy  
Company*

*Levant Company*

*East India  
Company*





*J. W. Jones*

**The  
Great Chartered Companies**





# The Great Chartered Companies

BY

DAVID HANNAY

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END-PAPER CHARTS

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## PREFACE

MY modest purpose in this book has been to direct the attention of the friendly reader to a phase in the history of the growth of nations and the spread of European civilisation too often ignored or told with uncritical brevity. It is, for instance, quite usual to find a writer dealing with the growth of our power on the sea, who dismisses the whole reign of James I as a time of mere decadence and torpor. And yet, it was precisely between 1603 and 1625 that English merchants and seafaring men, gathered into or employed by Chartered Companies, founded a colonial Dominion in America and an Empire in the East. But for their labours in preparing the way, the Royal Navy might never have had occasion to cross the Atlantic or to round the Cape of Good Hope. I do not pretend to have provided an exhaustive account of all that these merchants and their skippers did. A complete narrative of the East India Company's Sixth Voyage, of all that was intimately connected with it, with necessary explanations and elucidations, would fill a volume of this size. But we have, perhaps, a quite sufficient load of books, swollen to enormous proportions by the inclusion of superfluities, and by merciless repetitions. I have desired to

do no more than give what is essential in order to show that such was the work and such were the men.

It is a duty for me, and one to be performed with pleasure, to acknowledge that I have been able, by the courtesy of Messrs Blackwood, to make use of material already contributed to *Blackwood's Magazine*.

DAVID HANNAY



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# The Great Chartered Companies

## INTRODUCTION

CHARTERED Companies have been founded to serve purposes so widely apart from one another as banking and the promotion of scientific research. Our concern in this volume is with a part only of the total number of these bodies, namely, with the corporations which were brought into existence always, and necessarily, with the approval of the State, and frequently by its direct action, in most of the countries of Western Europe, for the encouragement of commerce and colonisation. In all cases they were endowed with some powers of jurisdiction and administration for the enforcement of the law and the maintenance of order in far distant seas, or in settlements on the other side of oceans. They began to arise in the sixteenth century; they played their greatest part in the seventeenth; in the eighteenth they declined. Some perished, others were absorbed by the national authorities which had first created them. In later times attempts have been made to revive them when they were no longer necessary. An exhaustive list of companies of this class would be long. In order to make the sense in which the name is used in these pages quite clear, it is enough to say that it stands for the East India Companies, English, Dutch, and French, for the English "Virginia" and the Dutch "West India" Companies, and

others of whatever nationality akin to them. The rank and file may be left to speak by their foremen.

The world was not ready for the Chartered Company till the sixteenth century. There was no place for it in the Greek republics, while the Roman emperors were very jealous of all associations. The Dark Ages were too poor, too anarchical, too unsettled to be capable of producing such organisations. The way for them began to be prepared when the Crusades threw open the gates of Asia to the enterprise of Europe. Yet the age of preparation was long. Corporate trading was certainly familiar to mediæval society. Guilds and Guilds Merchant abounded. Traders sailed in convoys for mutual aid and protection. The very name of the Venetian trading fleets, the "Mudue"—the Mutuals—demonstrates their purpose. When a route had been explored and was regularly worked, it was in the nature of things that agencies would be established in the ports of trade. Each Italian republic, for instance, would have its own *fondaco*—or *funduk*—which after-ages renamed a factory, at places not actually conquered and possessed by it. Coalitions of cities to help one another in commerce were not unknown. The most effective of all, and the longest lived, was the Teutonic Hanse—that implied and secretive, but none the less well-known and most effective league which dominated and carried on the trade of the North. It kept a measure of peace by heavy-handed, even tyrannical methods. In the South the Italian cities fought much among themselves, and their factories carried rivalry in business to the extreme of arson and murder. We need not accept all the figures given in mediæval narratives. It may be that the Christians in the city of Acre did not kill one another to the tune of 20,000, nor burn as many as 8000

houses during the last years of their tenure, but it is certain that many men were killed and many houses were burnt before the Mameluke Sultans of Egypt and Syria drove Knights of the Temple and Sepulchre, traders of Venice, Genoa, Pisa, and Amalfi, out together in 1291. We shall see a revival of such strife in the Indian Archipelago. Nor was Acre a rare exception.

The elements of the era of Great Chartered Companies were, in fact, working all through the later Middle Ages—the habit of sailing together for mutual insurance, the practice of establishing an agency to sell what was brought, to buy what was to be carried away, to provide a storehouse, and a residence for the staff and all fellow-countrymen who might come, and also to keep them under some measure of control. But the Middle Ages did not fully reach the Chartered Company, which not only bought and sold, but was endowed with the right to administer justice, with authority to make treaties, coin money—in short, to govern in the name of the State. The nearest approach was made by Genoa.

In 1346—that is, in the very midst of the hurly-burly of conflict between Latin princes who were remnants of the Crusades, and belated Crusaders, contending Italian republics, and the general strife of Christianity and Islam in the Levant—a Genoese admiral, Simon Vignosi, took possession of the Island of Chio just west of and on a level with Smyrna. Chio was worth having in itself, and also well placed to be a house of call or a refuge for Genoese trading craft on their way to and from the colonies of the republic in the suburbs of Constantinople and round the Black Sea. But the costs of the conquest and the expenses of administration were too heavy for the mother-city. So the Doge and his council

put the island into the hands of the twenty-nine captains of Vignosi's fleet, who were to hold it as a fief, and work it for their own advantage. The title of this body of joint tenants was a "Mahona," a word according to some of Greek, but more probably of Arabic origin, meaning, more or less, a co-operative society. They did not attempt to colonise the island, which had a Greek population. They administered it by native municipal officials. They had a head office—a "Leadenhall Street"—at Genoa in the town house (palazzo) of the Justiniani family, whence came their name "the Mahona of the Justiniani." The republic appointed a governor to represent the State in the island. The Mahona lasted for two centuries, and went through changes of fortune good and bad. The control of the republic was often merely nominal, and there were times when the members of the Mahona were rebellious. The membership altered in number and character as shares were inherited, sold, and divided. Towards the end, the Mahona prolonged its existence only by paying tribute to the Ottoman Sultans. In 1566 it was finally suppressed by Pialeý Pasha, by order of Sultan Selim II. The Mahona was a Chartered Company *in potentia*, a short step would have been enough to make it what the English and Dutch East Indies Companies were to be.

So far maritime commerce had been confined to the seas, indeed to the coasts, of Europe. Ships sailed early in summer and were brought back by the first days of autumn. None attempted to keep the seas in the stormy months. If there was no hope of reaching home in good time, then the merchant and skipper sought for a "winter harbour" and lay there till the end of next spring. Mediæval methods were sufficient for a trade conducted subject to these



limitations. Other ways would be needed when trading voyages were to be carried out to the end of ocean routes thousands of miles long. A century of struggle to expand passed before sea-borne commerce escaped from the ancient bonds. Deliverance did not come by happy accident, simply because Columbus crossed the Atlantic, or Bartholomew Diaz had rounded the Cape a few years earlier. It was the reward of deliberate effort made to reach a definite goal from early in the fifteenth century.

The target, or rather the prize, at which speculators and adventurers aimed, was direct access to the sources of supply of the desirable products of the East. Europe had known from a time long anterior to the Christian era that the remote Orient afforded gems, silk, drugs, and sweet-smelling and highly flavoured gums and spices for which men had a healthy if somewhat childish and barbaric love. Perfumes were acceptable in over-populated, ill-drained or undrained towns where human beings, who, to say the least of it, did not wash regularly, were crowded together. Spices gave flavour to insipid food and drink. Trade in goods of high value and of small bulk had flourished before, and in the times of the Romans. Nor did it ever quite cease. How much was known by some Europeans of the East, Near and Far, is not an easy question to answer. When in the time of the Roman Empire trading fleets sailed regularly from Berbera to the Gulf of Cambaya, going out on the south-westerly monsoon—the wind of Hippalus—and coming back after the change of the season, there were, as the writings of geographers prove, many who knew a good deal of the East. When the Portuguese first reached the coast of Malabar, they found Venetian workmen in the employment of the Zamorin of Calicut. They also found a traveller,

the Bolognese Ludovico Varthema. We may be sure that in the long stretch of years between Roman enterprise and the first voyage to India of the Portuguese many other roaming adventurers had found their way to those lands. That they left no record of their wanderings is natural. Most of them could neither read nor write. Many never returned. A trader who knew of a "good thing" was not forward to impart his secret to possible rivals. Marco Polo and the Papal envoys sent to the camp of the Great Khan, and Clavijo the Spanish ambassador to Tamerlane, were known, but the knowledge they imparted was misty and not very intelligible in so far as positions of markets and courses of trade were concerned. The best sources of knowledge for European inquirers were in the ports of the Caspian, from which Asiatic commerce reached the north of Europe by the course of the Volga, or in the Black Sea where Venice and Genoa held trading posts, or in the Syrian ports and Alexandria. At these points they met the caravans which had started from towns as far away as China. From them inquirers could learn something, and if information was grudgingly given, as was probably the case, still much could be deducted.

The most copious fountain of information was Alexandria. That port was the place to which came, and from which went, the main stream of Oriental commerce with Europe along the great trade route of the East. From the seas of China and Japan, through the Indian Archipelago, across the Bay of Bengal, round the south of Ceylon, up the west coast of India, on to the heads of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea, ran that trade route, then and now the most frequented in all the world. During our summer months the southerly monsoons—blowing from south-west—helped

the voyage eastward. In our winter months the north-easterly monsoon was favourable to voyages westward. The vessels were rigged to sail only before the wind, but for centuries no more was needed. The winds alternated regularly even where they were deflected, as they are in the Indian Archipelago, by lofty mountains. They could be relied on. It was well that the cargoes carried from the East were of small bulk and high value, for they had to bear the cost of many transhipments and of dues levied by princes. In the narrow Red Sea, where the prevailing wind is from the north, and the coasts, both Arabian and African, are foul with reefs, the ships from the Far East discharged their cargoes at Jeddah in Arabia. From thence they were brought in small craft able to navigate among the reefs, to the African shore, and by caravans to Alexandria. We hear of a canal cut from the Red Sea to the Nile, but it was certainly very little used, and allowed to silt up. The Mameluke Sultans levied duties of 30 per cent. on what passed through their dominions, Egypt and Syria. In the Persian Gulf the port of transhipment was the island of Ormuz at the entry, and the transit dues were not less.

The keen traders of Venice and Genoa could not but long to reach the original sources of all this lucrative trade directly, but the isthmus of Suez barred the way. Italian enterprise did not, perhaps even could not, undertake the very serious risk of setting out to discover whether the Far East, or an equivalent, might not be found by way of or on the west coast of Africa. But what Italy could not do directly might be achieved through an agent. The capitalists of Venice and Genoa found what they sought in Portugal—the last land in Europe to the west, and the natural starting-point for exploration west and south. It

will be obvious that no part of our space can be given to the history of Portuguese exploration. It must be enough to record that after three generations of creeping voyages down the African coast, made slow, not only by the quality of the ships and the inexperience of the crews, but also by the necessity to enable each cruise to pay its expenses by trade in gold dust, ivory, and slaves, the Cape was rounded in 1587, and India was reached at Calicut on the Malabar coast in 1598. By 1511 the Portuguese had planted themselves at Mozambique on the east coast of Africa, at Ormuz at the entry to the Persian Gulf, at Goa on the west coast of India, and at Malacca the entry to the seas of the Far East.

There is, however, one part of the story which is very relevant to our matter, and must not be ignored. Portugal had little to export, and was too poor to supply the necessary capital. It always had been. The trade with the East carried on under the Portuguese flag was a commission business in goods supplied from abroad, and financed by foreign capitalists—Italian bankers—the Alvizzi, the Medici, the Gualterotti, and others, who soon began to work in co-operation with the bankers of Germany and the Netherlands—Altringers, Fuggers, and the Schätz of Antwerp. These money masters were represented from the beginning and all along by their agents and their supercargoes in the Portuguese ships. They imposed silence on their servants, and did not give their own secrets away. But there were many outside of Portugal who knew the main facts of the state of affairs in the East. Huyghens van Linschoten, who is commonly spoken of as having revealed the truth to the ignorance of Europe, says that he went out to join a brother who was employed as an agent in India. Linschoten found a Hollander, Dirck Gerritz Pomp, called China, who was



settled as a trader at Goa, and there were others like him. Dirck Gerritz came back with a bagful of ducats at the same time as Linschoten, and with what was of more importance to his country than his modest competence, namely, the knowledge he was in a position to impart to the organisers of the first voyages.

Long before either of them sailed with the Portuguese to the East, German capitalists of Augsburg and Nürnberg had sent a ship of their own and money and agents with the fleet which Almeida took to the coast of Malabar in 1505-1506. Herr Franz Hümmerich has told their doings in a handy little book founded on good evidence, *Die Erste Deutsche Handelsfahrt Nach Indien*. Another witness who can be both easily and pleasantly consulted is Giovanni da Empoli of Florence, of whom, thanks to the affection of an uncle who wrote an account of him, we can form a quite definite picture. He was a sufficiently typical figure of the business world of his time to be worth a brief notice. Giovanni, who was born in 1483, was the son of a Florentine trader, and is described as a compact, well-set young man of an enterprising disposition, though of a placid friendly temperament, and great industry—an excellent combination of bodily and mental qualities for one who has his way to make at the age of eighteen. He went to take a place in the Bruges office of the important house of Gualterotti. From thence he went to the service of the great Italian firm the Affeitati at Lisbon. They were interested in the newly opened trade round the Cape. Though Giovanni was hardly of age, he was chosen from among many to represent the firm in the East. Capital was entrusted to him to use at his discretion, and one-fifth of the profits was to be his. He went and returned with good gains for his employers

and an honest profit for himself. Then he went out again, and served with the "great" Albuquerque in the conquest of Malacca. He went once too often, for he died in the Canton river. The reader who may wish to see what the life of a man of business was in times and places when he was also a warrior and a diplomatist should read Giovanni's letters to his "honoured father." They are easily to be found in the third volume to the appendix of the *Archivio Storico Italiano*.

So when Englishmen and Dutchmen began to sail for themselves to the East, they had ample means of knowing where they were going and what they would find.

## CHAPTER I

### THE FIRST GREAT COMPANIES

THE early part of the year 1553 saw the beginning of those Chartered Companies which provide the subject of this volume. First in time among them was "The Mysterie and Companie of the Merchants adventurers for the discoverie of Regions, Dominions, Islands, and places unknown." The name "merchant adventurers" was old. It had been given, for instance, to those English traders who worked our commerce in cloths with the Netherlands. They were a loose mediæval organisation in which members who had once received their freedom by purchase, inheritance, or gift were at liberty to employ their capitals, and work for themselves. They were bound to pay a contribution to a common fund, which was administered by a central authority in the interest of all. What is meant by these words here is that the merchant adventurers were expected to do for themselves a great deal which in the modern world is done by national navies, by ambassadors and consuls. After peace was made with Spain in 1603, Robert Cecil, Burleigh's son and afterwards first Earl of Salisbury, told the business world of London that it ought to set about providing these necessities for the reopened trade with the Peninsula. They could not, he frankly told them, expect the King to do so. Neither could they, in an age when three or four ships, mostly small, made up the summer guard

kept in commission by the Royal Navy in peace, and two were thought enough in winter; when £10,000 was a serious amount of money to the most potent sovereign in Europe, when the richest of them might have a difficulty in laying his hands on a smaller sum. King James I could not always pay the wages of the servants of his palace with regularity. In these conditions rulers were not merely tempted, they were driven, to delegate parts of their duties to those of their subjects who would venture to fend for themselves. His share was to give them a privilege, even a monopoly. When the company was open to all who could buy their freedom, and the members traded on their own account, it was said to be regulated.

The "Mysterie" (*i.e.* Mastery) of 1533 was on a different footing. It worked on a joint stock as a single body which paid dividends when it could. Regulated Company and Joint Stock Company were two types essentially different. The first had a way of insinuating or forcing itself into the second, as we shall see.

Apart from this distinction which is one of shape more than of character, there is another and far deeper one which went to the very root, to the very soul. It is the difference between those companies of many nations taken all together which grew, and those others which were made. I name it here once and for all to save repetition and that it may be borne in mind. The made companies were the more numerous and the less important by far. They were profusely created in the seventeenth century by rulers who were stimulated by the sight of the wealth earned by the English and the Dutch companies. It may not be dignified, but it is accurate to say that they were "machine made." They were intended not to govern an already



existing trade, but to bring a non-existing one into being. It may fairly be said of them that they were cut flowers which died and left no trace, save when they were watered and replaced by some sovereign power which started them. The companies which grew, which were recognised but not created by the State, rose on the soil of England and the United Netherlands, and nowhere else. They lived, as do the oak and the beech, by virtue of their native power as forest trees. When the time came for them to die, they left great creations behind them. If England has a great Empire in India, she has first of all to thank the Governor and Company of the Merchants of London. The Colonial Empire which arose in America, and the United States which grew out of that, look back to the Virginia Company as their founder. The noble dominion which still belongs to the Dutch was the creation of the United Netherlands East India Chartered Company.

The *Mysterie and Companie* of 1553 was known in later times as the Russian or Muscovy Company. But that came to be the case only after experience had taught our merchants that there was no profitable trade along the route they set out to explore except with the dominions of the Tzar. The more sonorous names, "Regions, Dominions, Islands, and places unknown," indicated a great deal more. The merchants were aiming at the Far East. They were avowedly eager to reach "Cathay." Our ancestors were uncertain as to whether China and Cathay were identical, or in what respects they differed if difference there was, but they knew that the name stood for the seas of the Far East. They had no need to consult Sebastian Cabot, whom they called in as expert, in order to be sure that those seas could be reached along the Spanish route through the

Straits of Magellan, or by the Portuguese route round the Cape of Good Hope. But Englishmen were not ready for a quarrel with Charles V, the Spanish ruler, or with the Portuguese kings. Until experience had taught them that they were mistaken, they believed, and were prepared to act on the belief, that there was a third route by the north-east and along the northern shore of Asia. It is true that they knew nothing about those regions, and that they relied on the mere speculation of the geographers of antiquity who also knew nothing, but would not honestly confess their ignorance. There was, of course, one practical way of clearing up doubts, and only one—to sail to those parts and find out. So, animated by hope and inspired by a spirit of enterprise, a very representative body of Englishmen met in the early days of 1553 and planned their adventure. The Marquis of Winchester, the Earls of Arundel, Bedford, and Pembroke, Lord William Howard, Sir William Cecil, Sir John Gresham, Thomas Gresham, Sir George Barnes, and about a hundred others, among whom there were three ladies, formed the Company, and subscribed £6000 among them—a much larger sum then than it is now. A charter was obtained from King Edward VI, and also a somewhat flowery letter of authority and introduction to the sovereigns whose dominions might lie on that route. Elaborate instructions were provided for the first expedition of three ships: the *Bona Esperanza* of 120 tons, in which sailed Sir Hugh Willoughby, the *Edward Bonaventure* of 160 tons, in which Richard Chancellor sailed as “chief pilot,” and *Bona Confidentia* of 90 tons, Cornelius Dürfurth, master.

The organisation of this little squadron is worth noting, because it was followed by later expeditions till far into the seventeenth century. It was also, thanks no doubt to the

influence of Sebastian Cabot, who had served much in Spain and was the first Governor of the English Company, very Spanish. At the head was Sir Hugh Willoughby, the Captain-General of the fleet—Capitan-General de la Armada. Sir Hugh was no seaman. He was chosen because he was a gentleman and an approved soldier whose function it was to exercise a general direction, maintain discipline, and represent authority. He had with him as sailing-master, William Gefferson, to whom would be entrusted the actual handling of the *Bona Esperanza*, which is termed "the Admiral." The Admiral in this case and many others is the title of the ship, not of an officer. But what we may call the chief navigating officer's authority was conferred on Richard Chancellor, who was appointed Pilot-General of the fleet. The arrangement which put the highest direction or political authority in one ship, and the highest navigating authority in another, was essentially stupid. But it was according to the Spanish model. A staff of "merchants"—in later ages we would have said supercargoes—were carried, the chief of them was the "Cape Merchant"—a misleading word if understood in a modern sense. Mr George Burton, who held the post, was not a merchant who traded to a Cape, but the "Capo" or "Cabo," the head. When in after-times we hear of the Company's "generals," we are to understand that they were as Sir Hugh Willoughby, and so were their "captains" and Cape merchants of particular ships—men having authority to direct but not seamen, dependent on their sailing-masters for "sea cases."

The three ships left Ratcliff on 10th May, passed before the eyes of the poor young dying King at Greenwich, and cleared Orford Ness only on the 23rd of June. They had

not reached latitude  $70^{\circ}$  till the 3rd of August. It was far too late in the year to allow of a long voyage to the eastward, but high spirit unchecked by experience nerved them, and they pushed on. The end is a familiar tragedy of our history at sea. The ships were separated by gales. Sir Hugh Willoughby was forced into the Arzina River near Kegor in Lapland, and there he and all his men died, frozen to death. It was another consequence of their inexperience. If they had known what to expect, and had provided themselves with stoves, as they easily might, they could have wintered in safety. The Russian fishermen who discovered them next summer found the Englishmen lying about dead on the beach. Fantastic stories were told of how Willoughby and his officers were found sitting frozen round a table. All these tales are pure inventions of an Italian news-letter writer in London.

Chancellor, after being blown about not a little after passing the White Sea and coming back, met Russian fishermen who piloted him to safety, and to where he was kindly treated by the Russian Monks of St Nicholas. They had set out to reach Cathay, and had discovered Muscovy. The soaring ambition which had encouraged the Company died away, and the merchant adventurers renounced the hope of reaching Cathay along a route blocked by ice, and turned to see what could be done with and through Russia. Chancellor made his way to Moscow and was well received by the Tzar Ivan IV, who was then at the beginning of his reign and had not yet sunk into a chronic state of rabid suspicion and sanguinary fury. When next year he returned home, he brought with him a favourable report of the prospects of trade in Russia.

A detailed account of the fortunes of the Russia Company



even during the short period of its serious importance could be given only at the cost of matter better worth attention. It started gloriously and did considerable things for about a generation, and then sank to being a not well-managed and financially embarrassed "regulated" company confined to trade with Russia. While it was in its glory, which was from 1553 to 1580 or thereabouts, it achieved two feats. The one was that it sent five representatives of English manhood and sound judgment as far into Asia as the waters of the Caspian and the deserts of Bokhara. The other was that it rough hewed the whole policy and the methods of the Great Chartered Company.

We must be content with the leading dates and events of its flourishing time. Chancellor, we have seen, returned in 1554. In the following year he went back to Russia with two ships which were sent with joy and confidence. King Edward VI was dead, but Mary Tudor and Philip of Spain, her husband, gave the Company a renewed charter. As the aim of the English merchants was the East, it did not so far threaten Spain's claim to prevent all enterprise westward across the Atlantic. So long as it kept to Russia and the interior of Asia the Company did not menace his position in the least. He probably did not believe that it would reach the seas of the East, and if he was sceptical on that point, he was right. So the adventurers of the second voyage sailed in high spirits after a parting festivity at which the Governor, old Sebastian Cabot, now a veteran of over eighty and at the very end of his life, entered into the dance as merrily as the most youthful of the Company.

The very sharp lesson taught them in 1553 was learnt in 1555. They started in good time, reached the White Sea in early summer, discharged cargo, reloaded, and came away

promptly. Chancellor wintered in Russia, again saw the Tzar Ivan, and arranged for the transport to England of a Russian embassy. In 1556 he returned, bringing with him Osep Nepea, Ivan's ambassador. It was a disastrous voyage. The two ships which had wintered at Arzina with Willoughby were to be brought back. They foundered at sea, Chancellor was wrecked on the coast of Aberdeenshire near Pitsligo and was drowned. But Nepea came safe to shore, reached London, and drafted a treaty with Elizabeth's Government—the first beginning of regular intercourse between England and Russia, and that was the work of the Company.

The relations of the parties being now fixed, with every sign of goodwill so far on the part of the Tzar, the next piece of work was to go further. It was very far from being the intention of the Company to rest content with the trade of Russia—"flax at 28s. and 30s.; wax £3, 13s. 4d. to £4; tallow 18s. the cwt.; ox hides 3s. 4d. and elk hides 6s. 8d. apiece; train oil £10 the ton; yarn 4d. the lb.; tarred rope 18s. and hemp 12s. the cwt." Useful things all of them, and capable of yielding a profit, but not the glory and the dream of the silks, spices, drugs, aromatics, and gems of the wealth-producing regions and islands of the warm eastern seas. They made up the vision which floated before the imagination of the Governor and Company. After sending Stephen Burrough to prove once more that there was far too much ice and snow on the North Asiatic coast to allow the seaway (if there was one, which they did not know) to be of any value as a trade route, the Company settled down to promoting a series of efforts to reach the longed-for East across Russia.

They were daring ventures well conducted. The first

of them, directed by Anthony Jenkinson, one of the strongest men in the long list of English explorers, was a very fine feat. He started from Moscow and worked his way by tributaries to the Volga, down the great river, whose banks were then desolate, to the Caspian, handling his own boats, even to the extent of twisting his own ropes and making his own anchors. Across the Caspian, he reached Central Asia, and took a caravan to Bokhara. There he turned aside and went into Persia, coming back in the end to Russia. His own narrative of what he did and saw among raiders, pirates, contending and barbarous potentates is one of the most exhilarating pieces of manly simplicity in the English language. He came again and yet again, and others followed him. But the result was negative, and could be no other. The Englishmen, groping in the dark, going by the feel of the wall, kept hoping that El Dorado would at last be found. It was not to be reached by that way. They ended by seeing themselves that the costs of the long voyage round to the White Sea, of land portages and river voyages were prohibitive. The goods they wished to sell could be supplied as "good cheap," or what was worse "better cheap," by the caravan routes from the Syrian ports. If they had not added a local Russian trade to their purely English business, they could not have paid their way. Some of them did well for themselves by this "private trade." Jenkinson died a wealthy man in 1610, but the Company did not flourish. Its real achievement was to show what could not be done, and to prepare the way for the East India Company.

The Englishmen of that generation won a valuable experience in Russia—in the art of organising trading stations in "factories." They learnt how to temper firmness with patience in dealing with barbarous peoples. They did

set up a good trade with Russia, but they had to renounce all hope of reaching the rich East. Even the Russian trade ended in disappointment. On that side the enemies were the Dutch. All through the reign of Charles V the northern Netherlands had been developing a busy sea-borne trade. Their first field was the north, where they fairly beat the German Hanse by peaceful, but deadly, competition. They worked their ships thriftily, traded with untiring pertinacity, and undersold their competitors. As many as eight hundred Dutch vessels passed the Sound into the Baltic in one early summer. The English Company was as hard pressed by them as was the German Hanse. And then it suffered much from a domestic enemy. When a government gives a monopoly to one body of its subjects, it inevitably imposes a limitation on all others. Now it has constantly happened that those others resent their exclusion, and strive to beat it down, or at any rate to defeat it by evasion. The interloper is the shadow of the monopolist, and it has ever been hard indeed to shake him off. The history of the Muscovy Company provides no exception to the rule. From very soon after the dates when the trade with Russia had been opened interlopers began to swarm in. In vain did the Company protest and appeal to Queen Elizabeth. She was handsome with them in the matter of their charter. Acts were passed to protect them, and stern rebukes were inflicted on interlopers, together with threats of fine and imprisonment. The interlopers were told that it was base of them to insist on coming in and spoiling the trade of the Company which had been at great expense to set the business going. It was all as useless as the law to compel people to eat fish for the encouragement of the fisheries. The odds were too long against the Company.



The East India Company, which suffered from interlopers, had this in its favour, that to fit out a ship for an unlawful venture in the Far East cost much money, but it was equally cheap and easy to run a cargo into the Baltic or the White Sea. When they were on the spot it was the interest of the interlopers to undersell the Company. And so they did. The Company was broken down by this pressure. Its claim to hold a monopoly withered away to a mere right to levy a small fee, which was spent on providing consular agents. This ability of a company to act as makeshift for a good diplomatic and consular service explains how the Government of Queen Elizabeth issued a charter in 1579 to the "Eastland Company." A monopoly of all the trade to the Baltic, except to the port of Narva, which was assigned to the Muscovy Company, was granted to the governor, deputy or deputies, and twenty-four assistants, with power to pass bye-laws, and to fine or imprison "non freemen" who infringed its privileges. It was a noxious superfluity, for the Russia or Muscovy Company would have served the turn equally well, and it was suppressed in 1689 by the victorious Parliament, as being a purely royal, and therefore illegitimate, restriction on trade.

In the days before 1580, when the Muscovy Company was becoming convinced that there was no possibility of profitable trade with the great markets of the East to be done across Russia, the merchants of London were being brought to reflect that another and a better way was offering itself to be used. Since cloths and other goods could be carried into the heart of Asia "better cheap" from the ports of Syria than from the north, why not go to those ports ourselves? The reflection was too obvious not to occur to many. Moreover, there was the trade of the Mediterranean

itself, and it was not to be despised. Until the reign of Henry VII, the produce of Italy was brought to us by the Flanders galleys of Venice. Currants were a great article of trade. It was a belief of the Venetians that if an Englishman could not obtain a sufficient amount of them at Christmas he habitually committed suicide. As our shipping improved, our enterprise grew. In the reign of Henry VIII Englishmen began to sail to the Mediterranean for themselves, though in an intermittent fashion. Our relations with Venice were absurdly disturbed when Queen Elizabeth was persuaded to give a monopoly of the Italian trade to one Acerbo Valutelli, a hanger-on of her favourite the Earl of Leicester, in 1575. Of course, he tried to squeeze both sides, and they reacted against him. There were Englishmen at work who could make their opposition felt. Before he entered the service of the Muscovy Company, Jenkinson had been in Syria with a view to trade. About 1575 a body of London merchants, of whom Edward Osborne and Richard Staper were then the best known, were applying themselves to undertakings from which the famous Levant Company was to arise. Osborne must not be baldly introduced without mention of the famous story in which he figures nobly. He was apprenticed to Sir William Hewett, who lived in one of the houses then standing on London Bridge. Hewett's daughter fell into the Thames and was gallantly rescued by Osborne who dived to her assistance. Of course he married her, an agreeable variation on the good old story of the industrious apprentice who marries his master's daughter. The romance is a little dimmed by the fact that the young lady was then an infant, and that they did not marry till years after the rescue. By then Osborne was long out of his time, he had been Hewett's right-hand

man and agent in Spain, had made money for himself, and was in all ways fit to be taken into partnership if only because nothing prevented him from starting on his own account, and with his knowledge he would have been a very serious competitor. He did marry Hewett's daughter, who was also his heiress, and with her won an established business and a large fortune.

Great trading companies are not the handiwork of heroes of romance, but of practical men who, after looking before them and counting the cost, can take risks. That Osborne was of this type, and so was Staper, is manifest. They went resolutely to work sending out two agents, of whom William Harborne, afterwards the first English envoy at Constantinople, was one. By tact and pertinacity Harborne won his way to the Sultan, and obtained permits to trade. Elizabeth looked on with favour and some help, because she wished to have the alliance of the Sultan against the King of Spain. On the 11th September 1581 she gave Osborne, Staper, and a few others letters patent authorising them to trade with the subjects of the Great Turk. There was a theory that no Christian man could have dealings with unbelievers unless by express permission of his rulers. It was a mere doctrine habitually disregarded. If Osborne, the first Governor, and Staper had not been trading with the unbelievers already, they would not have been in a position to do what they did.

The "Turkey Company" thus started was emphatically one of those which grew and were not machine made. Private enterprise brought it into existence, and business faculty directed its fortunes. In its first form it was limited to twelve persons, and to seven years, with a proviso that the charter might be revoked if the Company did not prove

advantageous to the realm. The clause was prudent, and it had the further merit that it gave the Government a strong—not to say a strangle—hold on the Company. The Queen could suppress it whenever she chose to allege that it was no longer profitable to the realm. The latent threat gave her power to compel the Company to bear the expense of maintaining the envoy at Constantinople and consulates in the Levant, as well as to secure a yearly contribution of custom dues to her treasury. The Company was not suppressed, but the charter was not renewed at the end of the seven years.

In the meantime another company had been formed by the name of the Venice Company in 1583. It was created to counteract the measures of retaliation taken by the republic when it was provoked by the exactions of Acerbo Valutelli. The whole story makes a curious chapter in the history of trade relations and of tariff wars, but is not quite relevant to our subject. After 1588 there was a desire both among the merchants and on the side of government for the formation of a larger, a more comprehensive company which should include both the “Turkey” and the “Venice.” In 1592 the great Levant Company came into existence. Its charter was renewed by the Queen in 1601 but lapsed on her death in 1603. King James I granted a permanent charter in 1605, and thereby finally constituted the Company which lasted till 1823.

The Levant Company produced no such outstanding personalities as Chancellor and Jenkinson. Nor could it play anything like the part of the East India, the Virginia, or the Hudson’s Bay Companies. It was a trading body, empowered to perform certain public duties on behalf of the State, but was bound to respect the settled authority



of the Italian States and the effective authority of the Turkish Sultans. It had even to make some humiliating submissions to the *avarias*, *i.e.* the exactions of Turkish pashas. Yet it did more than export "cloths and kerseys, dyed and dressed to the best proof, tin, lead, black cony skins, etc.," and import "oils, indigo, raw silks, spices, drugs, currants, wines of Candia, cotton-wool and yarn, programs, chamblottes, carpets, alum, galls, aniseed, brimstone, and diverse other things." It developed English trade and protected it against Levantine and Barbary pirates. It kept up a diplomatic and consular representation of Great Britain till the beginning of the nineteenth century, when its establishments were taken over by the Government in 1821. That part of its work was not done without jarring. The British envoy at Constantinople was "disgraced"—that is, derided—as being the agent of a trading company. He and the Company were not seldom at sixes and sevens over his salary and the "consulages" he wished to change. At home there were disputes with the King, for, since the Company paid the diplomatic pipers, it wished to choose them and to call the tune. The King wished to name them over the head of the Company. We need not dwell on these rather dreary wrangles in which neither party appears to advantage. But there was a third division of its activity in which the Levant Company helped to do a great work.

It has been named with some exaggeration but with a measure of truth as the mother of the East India Company. When it was founded in 1592 it was expressly authorised to trade with the "recently" discovered East Indies. Recently means since the voyage of Vasco da Gama in 1498. And those rights were expressly guarded when a charter was issued to the Governor and Company of the Merchants of

London trading to the East. So were those of the Muscovy Company. The most important of the Company's consulates was established, not on the shore of the Mediterranean, but at Aleppo, a centre of the caravan trade. Individual Englishmen made their way to Guzerat in India by those ways, sometimes alone, sometimes in partnership with Armenian traders or with Banyans, travelling with the caravans. Until the East began to be fearful and suspicious of Europeans, the road was as safe for them as for others. A regular post ran from Bussorah at the head of the Persian Gulf to the Syrian ports. The agents of the Levant Company were gaining and transmitting knowledge of the East, of Syria, Persia, and India, before the end of the sixteenth century. The overland route was never quite neglected.

There is, however, more than this participation in the spread of English enterprise. There is direct evidence of a connection. A curious little proof of a combined activity exists in the shape of the first letter-book of the East India Company. At one end there are a few entries relating to the business of the Levant Company. Those made for the new body begin at the other end. How it came to be used in this way is easily seen. All the most important members of the new, and many of its servants, had begun with the elder one. Some even continued to act with, or for both. When we hear that Keeling, the East India Company's "general," had "an Arab tongue," or that its captain, William Hawkins, spoke Turkish, we may be sure that they learnt those languages in the service of the Levant Company. There are traces of the vocabulary of the eastern Mediterranean in the letters and journals of the Indian Company's men. The frequent use of the word "scale," in the sense of port, is one. It is the Italian *scala*, the steps which in

French become *les échelles du Levant*. It was in early days the custom of the East India Company's "writers" to begin a letter addressed to a person of importance with the title Signor, which was certainly learnt in the Levant. Sometimes it was shortened to Sir, which has misled posterity into crediting untitled persons with knighthood. There will be little more to say of the Levant Company, but it is incumbent on us to make the record of the fact that it handed on the torch.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BIG BROTHERS

THE great English and Dutch East India Chartered Companies tower above all the others. They began to form themselves about the same time, and they were fully constituted at a very brief interval. Each came on slowly by tentative steps, after trial of the north-eastern route, and, on the part of the English, after trial of the north-western also. The voyages of circumnavigation of Drake in 1577-80, and of Cavendish in 1586-88, who both went by the Straits of Magellan, had given the world convincing proof that the English could sail wherever the Spaniard or the Portuguese had gone. When England was at open war with Philip II, it would seem that nothing prevented her from taking hold of the trade with the Far East, and the wish was working in the minds of the merchants of London. In 1589, the year after the defeat of the Armada, a body of them applied for, and received, the Queen's Licence to send out a small squadron to establish commercial relations in the East Indies. A handful of vessels sailed in 1592 under command of Captain Raymond, but the venture was not a success. Two of them rounded the Cape. Raymond went down with all hands in a storm on the coast of Madagascar. His colleague, James Lancaster, whose presence gives the venture such importance as it had, reached the Straits of Malacca, but the crew, which had been much reduced by



disease, refused to stay out any longer. Lancaster was forced to return by way of the Cape of Good Hope and the West Indies. There he was marooned, and owed his passage home to a French sea-rover. His ship got back in horrible distress, and the voyage was a failure. A bare mention of the enterprise of 1596 is all that is needed. Three ships were sent out by Sir Robert Dudley, natural son of the Earl of Leicester, a man who was of unstable, even flighty, character, who was to die long afterwards in exile at Florence, where he bore the title of Duke of Northumberland. The aim in this case was privateering. Nothing is known of their fate. They sailed, and they came not back, and that is all we can be sure of—though, of course, guessing is easy. The second voyage of Cavendish to the Straits of Magellan, which ended with his miserable death, and the disasters of his imitators need only be noted.

Since the merchants of London were the men we know, and, judging by their actions, we can safely affirm one thing, they came soberly to the conclusion that what they aimed at doing would never be done in these ways. Their purpose, they said, was to promote the good of the realm by the trade of merchandise. Sporadic voyages, with a special licence for that once, and privateering were not enough. There must be a permanent body to organise and direct, and the aim must be trade. In short, they meant to have a Chartered Company with due powers legally conferred, and except on that condition they would not again move. Therefore, in 1599, a number of merchants combined to subscribe a stock of just over £30,000 to serve as a foundation. On 24th September 1599 they met, formed a committee, and then selected another committee out of their number to apply to the Lords of the Council

for the needful recognition and authority. For a time all seemed to go well. The Lords of the Council were favourable, and the Queen approved. The merchants began to go into business details.

At this moment an obstacle arose. Queen Elizabeth could make war with Spain, but would have preferred to be at peace. It is only critical to add that most of her trading subjects found that privateering was a very poor substitute for regular commerce with the Peninsula, and would have been glad to see an end of the war, now when the failure of the Armada had removed the danger of a Spanish invasion. It must be remembered that since Philip II had succeeded by right of his mother to the throne of Portugal in 1580, the whole Spanish peninsula was under one sovereign. When, therefore, in 1599 negotiations were begun with Philip III, who had succeeded his father in 1598, the East India scheme was suspended. The Lords of the Council informed the merchants that it would "be more beneficial for the general state of merchandise to entertain a peace." It was not to be denied that the promotion of a scheme to intrude on the sphere of influence of Portugal in the East would not tend to the making of a settlement.

The merchants were perfectly respectful to the Lords of the Council, but they were resolved to persevere, and they replied by a memorial which is very characteristic of them. It is also excellent evidence both of the nature of their plans and of the extent of their knowledge. They presented a statement in which they set forth "certain reasons why the English merchants may trade into the East Indies, especially to such rich Kingdoms, and Dominions, as are not subject to the King of Spain and Portugal."

With a demure gravity not untouched by malice, the merchants ask "their Honours" of the Council "to urge the Commissioners of the Spanish peace to put down under their hands the names of all such islands, cities, towns, places, castles, and fortresses as they are actually at this present moment possessed of, from the said Cape of Buena Sperança, along the coast of Africa, on the coast of Arabia, in the East Indies, the Malucos, and other oriental parts of the world."

They, the merchants, were perfectly well aware that the ministers of Philip III would never consent to make any such declaration. Portugal claimed that it held an exclusive right to the whole discovery, conquest, and trade of the East, first by right of discovery and then by virtue of the Pope's Bull. By making a separation between effective possession and no possession, it would obviously have renounced its sole right. The English merchants undertook to respect acquired rights, but as they well knew, this was not enough for the Portuguese. Since no satisfactory answer was to be expected, the petitioners say that they, "for Your Lordships perfect instruction in this behalf, will take the pains to do it for them," *i.e.* for the Portuguese. They then proceed to give lists of the possessions of the King of Portugal in the East, and also of those Oriental countries which were still independent and with which we claimed to have the right to trade. Both lists are remarkably full and accurate. The merchants support them by quoting the authorities they had consulted—who are just the very authors we have to make use of to-day when we wish to learn what the Portuguese Empire was—Castanheda, Barros, Galvão, Osorio, Sande, and they add the "Register" of the lading of the great carrack captured in 1592. Then follow

certain Spanish authorities, Ramusio's collection, the narratives of the voyages of Drake, Cavendish, and Lancaster, and the travels of Ralph Fitch, who was then in London and was consulted by them. They end with the travels and sailing directions of the Dutchman, Linschoten. They knew as much about the state of the East in 1600 as we do, and drew their knowledge from the same sources. The whole document is written in a fine tone of firmness and moderation, and is the work of well-informed thinking men.

When the negotiations for peace broke down, the scheme was taken up again. The Company received its first charter on 30th December 1600, and set diligently to work to prepare their first voyage "for the honour of the country and the advancement of the trade of merchandise." What the Company was to do in the infinitely important early years of its history cannot be fairly judged unless by the light of a clear understanding of its position at home. "The Governor and Company of the Merchants of London" was the official name, and it is significant. They were not merchants of England, but men in the city. The distinction was a real one, as the Company sometimes found to its cost. No limit was put on the numbers of the "adventurers," a word which has not quite the same meaning for us that it had for them. In 1600 and later, the adventurer was he who adventured his money, had a venture in a voyage. Whoever would invest £200 in a voyage was a member of the Company—for that voyage. The connection was not permanent, for no joint stock was formed for years. A separate one was raised for each voyage. As for the general government, the merchants were left to shape one for themselves, and they did so in a way at once simple and elastic.



Seventeen "committees"—the word then meant a single person, not a body of men—were chosen to form a "Court of Directors of the East India Association." They delegated particular duties to chosen members from among themselves. More details will be called for when the early voyages are dealt with. At present it is enough to note that the Company in its early years was an association of city men authorised by the Crown to trade with the East, and endowed with a monopoly of the route by the Cape of Good Hope. It had no monopoly of the whole Eastern trade, for the rights granted to the Muscovy and the Levant Companies were expressly guarded.

While the London Company was coming to birth its great rival was taking shape in the Northern Netherlands. Essentially there was no difference in character between the two. The United Netherlands East India Chartered Company grew by a natural process out of the community to which it belonged. It, too, was a manifestation of the energy of a people, and it also imposed itself on the political directors of the State. If we look only at the dates of the final instruments of government conferred on them, the London Company appears to have been slightly the older of the two. But an earlier date of baptism is not necessarily a proof of seniority of existence. The Netherland Company began to live and to act in 1596. The shipping of Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and Brabant had followed up its first victory over the German Hanse by making adventurous voyages to Brazil and to the Guinea coast. King Philip II provoked the seamen and merchants of those provinces to go yet further afield when he endeavoured to shut them out from all share in the trade of the East through Lisbon. Except by fits and starts he did not try to exclude these

insurgent subjects of his from his own ports. Neither he nor his subjects could dispense with the services of the carriers who brought the produce of the North to exchange for those of the South. He looked most foolishly to punish them by cutting them off from the spices of India. It was an insane undertaking. He only drove them to go to the East for themselves.

"They" in the last quarter of the sixteenth century meant not only the northern Netherlanders, but a good deal more. Included among them were many southern Netherlanders, and an element of northern Frenchmen who were in arms against the King of Spain and the religious tyranny of the Counter-Reformation. They fled to the insurgent States to escape the stake, and they brought with them their energy, the ability of many among them, and not a little capital. They stood at bay between the devil (they would have used the word in the most literal sense) and the deep sea. Nor was it a question of merely standing to defend themselves. They struck back by way of the sea. In its crudest form their fight was carried on by "The Beggars of the Sea," who retaliated for the cruelty of the Spaniards ashore by ruthless ferocity on the water. But the plundering and massacring of the "Beggars" were a mere phase. Behind them was the steady rational pressure of explorers and traders. In that same part of the anti-Spanish and anti-Papal host there was mental activity, scientific inquiry directed to navigation and cartography, and a definite political aim. The King of Spain and Portugal draws his resources from the Indies, East and West—very well then, the sea is open to us; let us cross it to strike at the roots of his power. That was the guiding thought. As the White Sea was already familiar to them, they made a try to go

through the north-eastern passage, only, of course, to prove once more what was already demonstrated, namely, that there was no going by that route. Then, after careful survey, much study, after listening to cartographers and geographers, after sending agents—the Houtmans—to inquire in Portugal and report, the merchants of the state of Holland sent out their first venture in 1595.

It was the leader in a wonderful outburst of enterprise which preceded, and also produced, the creation of the Great Company in 1602. A bare list of dates of sailing is, of course, no history of an achievement, but it provides a bird's-eye view, and a closer view can follow in a proper place.

In 1595 and 1598 the Hollanders sent out two voyages by the Cape of Good Hope.

In 1598 the Zeelanders sent two voyages by the same route.

In 1598 two expeditions were sent to the East Indies by the south-west route, *i.e.* the Straits of Magellan.

In 1599 three voyages were made to the East Indies.

In 1600 other voyages to the East Indies followed.

In 1601 the Zeelanders sent out another expedition.

In the same year the Hollanders sent out a great undertaking, which was the last voyage made before the formation of the Chartered Company.

This is but a bare and fragmentary summary. Yet it is enough to show the magnitude and the diversity of the effort: eight companies in all contributed to the undertakings. Nor were they preliminaries, like the voyage of Raymond and Lancaster, having no organic connection with the great body which followed them. The “Algemeene Geoctroyeerde Oost Indische Compagnie” was made up of

the ships, the capitals, and the men of the separate private associations.

The questions why they did not combine, and why they were not constrained to combine sooner cannot be ignored. Much of consequence for us is implied in the answers. The Government of the United Netherlands was widely different from the centralised Monarchy of the Tudors in England. The Allied Netherlands would be a more accurate title than the United. The Union was a confederation of States, each of which claimed to be sovereign and independent since it had thrown off the authority of Philip of Spain. They were represented by a common governing body of delegated and limited powers—the States General. The members of this board of directors were instructed by their constituents, and were bound to refer to them when any new question arose. Whatever concerned the whole Union—the “Generality”—was bound to be voted unanimously, and no single State considered itself under an obligation to obey unless it had consented. It is obvious that combined action was hard to secure with such a government as this.

The States General would have been very willing to bring the various companies formed for “trade afar” in the East Indies to combine. They were nervous about the possible consequences of unchecked competition among them. Apart from the possibility that, far away on the other side of the world and beyond control, they would fight with one another, or would find general piracy at the expense of Asiatics and European neutrals a quicker way of making profit than orderly trade, there was another and a patent danger. It was that they sent up prices by competing to buy in the East, and sent them down by competing to sell



in Europe. So the States General strove earnestly and repeatedly to bring the companies together. But they were limited to the use of persuasion. It was hard, indeed, to induce Zeeland to consent to a union of its company with the Holland companies, until it was sure that unity would not mean mere absorption. To all other causes of obstruction to the creating of the Company must be added the dislike, not to say the positive hatred, of the Netherlands, a people of carriers and fishermen, for all restrictions on the freedom of trade, such as monopolies are bound to be. Nevertheless, in the end, John of Oldenbarnevelt, the leading statesman of the Republic, and Maurice of Nassau, the Stadtholder, *i.e.* Naval and Military Commander-in-Chief of five of the seven provinces, did succeed in persuading them all to agree to the formation of a monopolist company for trade in the East Indies. The absurd constitution of the Republic, which, when you read a description of it in Wickefort or Basnage, looks as if it was designed to render all government impossible, worked simply because the Netherlands could be persuaded to be unanimous when a general interest was at stake. They were brought by experience and argument to realise that the only way of keeping order among their countrymen on the other side of the world, and of avoiding cut-throat competition at home, was the creation of a Great Chartered Company, endowed with large powers.

It would have been a waste of time to endeavour to persuade a people so deeply wedded to respect for States sovereignty to submit to the exclusive right of such a body as the Governor and Company of the Merchants of London. Nor indeed did any single town, not even the richest of them—Amsterdam—predominate in the United Provinces as did our own capital in England. Since there

must be a monopoly, the Netherlanders were fixedly resolved that it must be one with the widest possible membership, and that it was to be free to sail from any of the maritime States of the Union. The rule that vessels must return to the port from which they sailed was manifestly intended to prevent, as far as might be, the concentration of the trade at one city. Nor was it a matter of no consequence that the new company was made by joining together the eight which were already in existence. As might be expected, there were some delays, and changes were made, during the adjustment of the administrative machinery of the "Combine." We need not dwell on them, for they were settled early. When it was fully organised it was formed as follows:—

At the basis was the joint stock, which was the indispensable capital. Careful inquiries, guided by study of original documents, have put the amount at 6,449,588 "gulden" or florins, which was equivalent to £537,465. All parts of the Union were invited to subscribe, and all were assured of a share in the government of the Company in proportion to their contribution. Touchy as they were on the subject of their sovereignty, the Netherlanders did not think it unreasonable that those who paid most should have the chief say. Holland was the richest of the members of the Confederation. It paid 56 per cent. of the taxes levied in the "Generality," and was in the habit of advancing the quota of the inland agricultural provinces which had the least command of liquid capital. It provided more than half the joint stock. Therefore it had a proportional share in the governing bodies. Five boards directed the working of the local subdivisions of the Company. Amsterdam with twenty members came first, because that city had sub-

scribed 3,674,915 gulden to the joint stock. Zeeland, which had found 1,300,405, had a board of twelve, Delft (469,400) had seven, Rotterdam (173,000), Hoorn (266,868), and Enkhuizen had each seven. Above these local boards stood the "Collegium"—college—or ultimate authority known as the Bewindhebbers, the "holders of the command." The members of this body were divided on the same principle of representation for all in proportion to the share contributed. They were seventeen in all—eight from Amsterdam, four from Zeeland, one each for Delft, Rotterdam, Hoorn, and Enkhuizen. One member to complete the list was named in succession by the other States of the Union which were not maritime and had no special board. A committee of ten delegates of the whole Company was settled at the Hague to conduct all business with the States General. This representative body, the nearest approach to a Parliament of the United Provinces, had contributed 25,000 gulden to the stock. This investment gave it a stake in the Company, but what was of more importance, it established a common interest between them. The support of the States General was effective. If they did not supply much money, they did make gifts of powder and shot, tackle, nautical instruments, and even ships. In difficult times they guaranteed loans. Without this aid the Netherlands Company could not have weathered the troubles of its early years. The backing of the States General gave it a great advantage over its English rival.

The London Company depended wholly on the King. It had no parliamentary title, and was, indeed, looked at with distrust in that quarter, because it was suspected of being, in part at least, meant to provide the King with money, and so render him independent of parliamentary grants.

King James I and King Charles I were always in financial distress. They were unable to help the Company even if they had wished to come to its assistance. On the contrary, they were sorely tempted to fleece it, or to help rivals—and they did not resist the temptation.

The work of the two Companies cannot be appreciated, nor even as much as understood, without some knowledge of the conditions, both physical and political, with which they had to deal. The physical go far to explain the political, and therefore must be considered first.

The field, or theatre, to be mastered by the newcomers was the vast stretch of water, coasts of mainlands, and innumerable islands between the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to the west, and China and Japan in the Far East—a full half of the circumference of the globe. It may seem to be little or not at all better than platitudinous talk to add that their work was to be done in sailing ships. Yet, for obvious as the truth may look, it and its implications are to be carefully borne in mind. They are easily and therefore frequently ignored, with the inevitable result that events as recorded by even valuable historians are only half intelligible, or straggle like geese on a common.

The first implication to be allowed for is that, as the sailing ship is wholly dependent on the wind, its movements, and therefore the courses of trade and the operations of war for which it was indispensable, were largely dictated. This was the case everywhere, but on the great seaway a universal condition acted with a power and a regularity unknown in other regions. That the wind bloweth as it listeth is true only in the sense that man has no control over its blowing. It obeys a master. It follows the sun. When the sun is down and the earth cool the wind blows off shore—in many



parts of the world with mechanical regularity—and when the sun is up and the earth is heated the sea breezes pour over it, punctual almost to the minute. This alternation is found in all tropical and subtropical lands and seas. Within the tropics the wind blows from south to north, or from north to south towards the equator. When the sun is in the northern hemisphere the southerly trades blow even up to eight degrees of latitude beyond it. When it is in the southern then the northerly winds blow further down. In the eastern seas the dominating, the gigantic example of the wind's obedience to the sun is given by the monsoons. They divide the year into seasons—which is the original meaning of this Arab word. The huge continent of Asia is the northern coast of the still huger southern ocean. When the sun is up in the north, then the southerly monsoon blows in on the land; when it is over the south, then the monsoon is northerly. The proximity of land, the barrier provided by lofty mountains affect the monsoons and deflect them. They blow more strongly out in the open sea, and longer too, than near the land, which has its belt of on-shore and off-shore breezes. The rotation of the earth gives them a slanting course from north-east to south-west, or from south-west to north-east. When the one dies down the other does not begin at once. There are intervals between them of calm, of baffling light winds, of rain, of hurricanes and typhoons. From May to September is the time of the south-westerly monsoon, which is the more powerful of the two. From October to March the north-easterly monsoon rules.

Now all the movements of Asiatics or Europeans on the waters of the great seaway were conditioned by these alternate blowings of the monsoons, which may fairly be said to

be gigantic and far-reaching on-shore or off-shore winds. The currents, though they are important, need not be spoken of at equal length—for a simple reason. When wind and current were running in the same direction the old sailing ship was helpless against them. When the wind was blowing against the current, then it held up the water on the surface, and it drove on the ship. Therefore the seaman knew that his vessel could stem the current. He lost speed, but did not lose way altogether.

Let us take a single good example of the concurrent or counter-workings of air and sea as they affected the navigator, just to illustrate our point once and for all. No better can be found than is afforded by the voyage out and home from Europe to the western coast of India.

Our ship will sail early in the year, so that one may be round the Cape of Good Hope in time to profit by the southerly monsoon when it is blowing strong—that is to say, in June. She will be steered south-west from the Canaries, so as to evade the current and wind on the west coast of Africa which are against the outward-bound, and friendly to the homeward-bound seaman. Care, however, will be taken to keep at a safe distance from the east coast of South America. A current runs along it from the north which will carry her into the deadly Abrolhos if the sailor is unwary. A light burns on those reefs to-day, and a very impressive sight it is, blazing across the black water of the night-hours miles off—a comfort and support to the sea-faring man when he sees it on the beam. There was no light on the Abrolhos in the seventeenth century, only breakers and wreckage of ships between the reefs. In due time the course is altered to the eastward. The ship reaches the Cape. It is a wonder of luck if there is no scurvy

raging among the crew—generally there is. If she is Dutch or English she will turn into “the watering-place of Saldanha,” which we now call Table Bay, to renew her water and barter for sheep and cattle with the natives. When the scurvy has been expelled, or abated, the voyage is resumed. You see how necessary it is to start out in good time if the Mozambique Channel is to be cleared before the change of the season. A strong current runs from north to south through the channel except when the south-westerly monsoon is in full swing, then the water is held back on the surface, and good way can be made. If the margin of time at your disposal is wide, it is safe to anchor at the Comoros for fresh water, meat, and fruit, your aids against the persistent, ever-recurring, and devilish scurvy. Madagascar, too, can be cleared while enough of the south-westerly monsoon remains to allow of the completion of the run to the Malabar coast or the Gulf of Cambaya. If by ill-luck or bad management the ship is not clear of the channel before the change of the season, there is no getting on. If she is a Portuguese she is taken back to Mozambique. Englishmen and Dutchmen had to look out for a convenient bay on the coast of Madagascar or at Socotra. Both had to wait for next year. With necessary changes of names, this is what has to be said of all the voyages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From June to September was the time for steering east. From November to March the course was westward and homeward. With the improvement of the ship and the increase of knowledge, men learnt how partly to evade the forces which tyrannised over the earlier seamen. But they cannot be contumaciously defied to-day. A tramp steamer or sailing ship has still to yield to the monsoons.

One consequence of this regular alternation which enabled the navigator to foresee what wind he would find at a given place and time deserves to be noted. Though they had been going and returning on those waters for long centuries, the Asiatic peoples had never been taught or forced to develop a good ship. They had innumerable vessels big and small. A few were equal in size to any built in Europe about the year 1600. The East India Company's "General" Saris (pronounce Sayers, which is how his family often spelt the name) had an opportunity to measure several of the large craft of Guzerat which carried Mahometan pilgrims to the Red Sea port Jeddah. He found that one of them was 140 feet long from the figure-head to the stern, 40 feet in the beam, and 20 feet in the hold. When they were running before the wind, they would sometimes outsail a European pursuer. But all they could do was just to run before the wind. If the Asiatic peoples had not found out how to sail on a bowline, the reason was most certainly not that they lacked wits. Marco Polo, a most competent authority, records that the big Chinese junk in which he made a long voyage was built in water-tight compartments. Since the Chinese shipwrights could forestall European builders to that point, they could have evolved a better system of rigging if necessity had forced them to try. But it did not. Since there was a certainty that for months in the year the wind would be there to blow them along their outward-bound way, and then for other months blow in the opposite direction to bring them "like doves to their nests," they did not see the need for more than the power to run before the wind. Therefore their ships were limited, and because they had a settled habit, inherited from of old, of trying to do only the easy thing, their seamen were



inferior. Yet there were and are fairly good seamen in the East, and with training and practice they would assuredly have grown better. The English and Dutch seamen had no reason to fear Asiatic opposition.

Nor had they any ground for doubting their power to beat down whatever effort the Portuguese might make to bar them out—and that they would try was certain. The Portuguese Empire so-called had never been strong. It dominated along the seaway because there was no effective force to meet it on the water. Ashore it was represented by a long string of trading posts and ports drawn from Mozambique up to Ormuz at the entry to the Persian Gulf, then down by Diu, at the end of Kathiawar, to Goa, their headquarters, and so onward round Ceylon, up the Bay of Bengal, across to Malacca, and away to the mouth of the Canton River and the south-west coast of Japan, with a port or two in the Moluccas. All these stations were subject to attack. When one was hotly assailed, it was necessary to draw men from others to make up a relieving force. Then the ports deprived of all, or a large part, of their defenders were attacked. Some posts held for a time were given up from sheer inability to hold them. The most important of their possessions except Ormuz and Goa, that is to say, Malacca, was brought to the verge of destruction again and again by the Malay Sultans of Achin and Bantam and Johore. The vices of their administration have been so frankly confessed by their own historians, who, strange to say, were both diligent and honest, or so bitterly told by the great Jesuit missionary, Francis Xavier—a Basque gentleman of noble character and a true saint—that it is altogether superfluous to dwell on them. Their shipping was beneath contempt. A third of the

vessels they sent home were lost on the way, not because of their bad quality only, but because of their wretched seamanship and manning. It had been the deliberate policy of the Portuguese Government to form a population of its own in the East by encouraging, or even enforcing, marriage with native women. And that policy had succeeded after a fashion. It is safe to say that three-fifths of the "Portuguese" of the years about 1600 were the children of Hindu or Malay mothers. They were often mere pirates, who pretended to be traders. As was natural, they had made themselves perfectly hateful to the natives everywhere. English and Dutch alike could be sure of the sympathy, even if not of the active help, of the population whenever they came into collision with the Portuguese. Add to all the other causes of the downfall of Portugal in the East this very effective one which has not been sufficiently allowed for. We have seen that foreign bankers, Italians, Germans, and Netherlanders, had financed the Indian trade from Lisbon, and had supplied the goods carried on the outward-bound voyages. By 1600 the Italians and Germans had ceased to be able to play their old part. In the course of the great struggle between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, capital and commercial enterprise had concentrated in the Northern Netherlands, and England had developed. When these two came into the Eastern market themselves, they had no further reason to help Portugal, and they had every reason for competing with her. When they did, they could always undersell, since they were bringing their own goods.

Here it is not inappropriate to name, for reference when necessary, the houses in London which served as headquarters for our Governor and Company. For the first twenty-one years of their life they met in the mansion of

their first Governor, Sir Thomas Smythe, in Philpot Lane, Fenchurch Street. In 1621 they moved to Crosbie House, Bishopgate Street, the property of the Earl of Northampton, William Compton. In 1638, when their lease ran out and they were asked for a higher rent, they moved into a part of a house standing in the angle formed by Lime Street and Leadenhall Street. It belonged to their then Governor, Sir Christopher Clitherow. Now they were on the ground they were to occupy to the end. But they were not always in the same house. In 1647, being discontented with the high rent they were paying to Sir Christopher Clitherow's widow, they moved next door into the Elizabethan timber house of Lord Craven, who was the son of a Lord Mayor. He was the chivalrous and pathetic gentleman who so loyally served the "Queen of Hearts"—the daughter of King James I—who was by marriage Electress Palatine, and in a very evil hour became titular Queen of Bohemia. Some say he married her after the death of her foolish husband. He lived to 1697, and it was his sad fate to figure as a kind of forlorn ghost of the old cavalier loyalty, when in 1688, he, being then colonel of the Coldstream Guards, was constrained by the order of James II to surrender St James's Palace to the Dutch Guard of the Prince of Orange. He would have fought if he had been free to follow his inclination.

In 1710 the house was purchased from his successor. In 1723, being old and threatening to fall down, it was replaced by the stone building which grew and grew as the Company did, outlived its builders, and when they were no more, was sold, pulled down, and replaced by offices in 1861. Lord Craven's was the timber house known from old prints with more or less accuracy. It had wooden galleries, paintings of the Company's arms and of ships on the front,

and atop a wooden figure of a sailor with dolphins on either side. The size was not great, for the front on Leadenhall Street was only  $21\frac{1}{2}$  feet and on Lime Street  $32\frac{1}{2}$  feet. The price paid in 1710 was £3500 down and £500 more when the seller handed over certain documents. In 1861 the speculators who bought the property paid £155,000. But the fully grown "India House" was far larger than the mansion of Lord Mayor Craven.



## CHAPTER III

### THE VIRGINIA COMPANY

WHILE the Governor and Company of the Merchants of London were fitting out their venture and sending it to the East, another and a shorter-lived, but when its ultimate consequences are justly estimated, an equally great undertaking, was coming to birth. If the date of the first charter is taken as the actual beginning of "The Virginia Company," the mother of all our colonies on the Atlantic seaboard of North America was younger than the East Indian by six years. But the issue of the charter was only the official recognition of what had been growing for a generation. The letters patent which recorded the beginning of its legal existence were dated 6th of April 1606. They were granted by King James I to "Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Sommers Knights, Richard Hackluyt Clerke, Prebendarie of Westminster, and Edward Maria Wingfield, Thomas Hannam and Raleigh Gilbert Esquires, William Parker and George Popham, Gents, and divers others" "to reduce a colony of sundry of our people into the part of America commonly called Virginia," between the thirty-fourth and forty-fifth degrees of north latitude, and occupy islands within one hundred miles of the coast. It is a long stretch of coast from the northern border of the present State of Georgia to the centre of Maine. When our ancestors used the name Virginia, they understood it in an

even wider sense, for they included Florida. If King James approved of latitude  $34^{\circ}$  N. as the southern limit of his grant, the reason was that Florida was actually in possession of Spain. He who had just made peace with that country, and had set his heart on avoiding another war, could not authorise an undertaking which would have implied an invasion of known Spanish territory.

The limit was not strictly observed, as we shall see from the case of Bermuda which is in  $32^{\circ}$  N., but it shows clearly what was the principle King James's government was prepared to act on. In the West as in the East he was ready to acknowledge the acquired rights of Spain, and of Portugal then united to it. But he would not forbid his subjects to go to such parts of "The Indies" as were still unoccupied. He did not intend to help them to go, but he would not forbid them to go at their own costs and hazards, or punish them for going—unless they acted in a piratical manner. If Raleigh had kept his promise not to make an onfall on a Spanish settlement, he would not have been executed. But he took his ships to a place where, as his own letters clearly show, he well knew that the Spaniards had a town, and he sent them to attack it in violation of a solemn engagement. Being a child of *virtú* (which was not virtue) and of the Renaissance, he had their contempt for truth, and their belief that he who won and brought back wealth would always be welcome. King James's view was plainly stated to the Spanish ambassador, Pedro de Zuñiga, in 1607.

The charter of 1606 had been led up to by a long series of preliminaries. As far back as the reign of Henry VII, Cabot had sailed to high latitudes in America. English adventurers, financed by men of business in London, had prowled on the coast of Brazil and in the West Indies when

Henry VIII was King. They worked sometimes in combination, sometimes in quarrel and rivalry, with French sea-rovers. From the very beginning of the reign of Elizabeth invasions of the seas claimed as wholly theirs by the Spaniards grew more common and more audacious. When we remember how widely the Spanish settlements in the West Indian islands and on the Main were scattered, how small they generally were, and how little able Philip II, with his hands full of costly tasks in Europe, was to protect them, we are tempted to wonder that no lasting settlement was effected. The explanation is, however, simple enough. All these undertakings (with two exceptions) were cruises of armed smugglers, or plundering raids, and were meant to be transient. The adventurers in the old sense, that is to say, the speculators who financed them, and the adventurers in our sense who carried them out, worked for profit on investments, or hoped to return with a pocket full of money. It was only by a return home that these desires could be satisfied. The high-minded Earl of Cumberland did plan to retain possession of Porto Rico when he took it in 1598. But the tropical fevers which broke out in the garrison he left, terrified his men, and the survivors fled.

The two exceptions will at once be named by all readers. They were Sir Humphrey Gilbert's attempt to colonise Newfoundland in 1583, and Raleigh's ventures at Roanoke, in what is now North Carolina, in 1585 and 1587. Both ended in disaster. There is a kind of prophecy of what was to come in the fact that Sir Walter handed over all his rights to Sir Thomas Smythe and a body of adventurers in 1589. He retained for himself one-fifth of whatever gold and silver they might discover. His fortunes were beginning to decline. He could not bear the burden of promoting

colonisation any longer. So he passed on the torch to the then governor of the Smyrna, and future governor of the East Indian and Virginian Companies. The achievement to be reached was not to be performed by armed smugglers, raiders, or even paladins. Not the knight errant, but a much less romantic person, won the prize. He was the "average Englishman," who was not a hero, not a sage, still less a saint, but just in most cases a resolute man intent on doing the practical best he could. The field was not left to him alone. The irrepressible tramp and vagabond, who haunts the footsteps of better men, made his inevitable appearance East and West. In the East we have to learn about one of that sort in the Company's service who, having been at his cups in the early hours, tumbled into a rajah's galley. It was his business to be there, but it was not his business to be in the state called "quarrelsome drunk." Neither was it his duty to use abusive language to the native ruler, and try to hit him on the head. If one of the rajah's councillors had not intervened with the plea that the man was mad, the spearmen who were the chief's guard would have filled him with their weapons as thickly as ever a ham was sprinkled with cloves. We need not make too much of him, but there he was, and he cannot be ignored, more particularly not in the history of the Virginia Company. The honest men had to carry him along with them, endure him as best they could, and knock him down when he grew outrageous.

Most of the sorrows and losses of the Company can be accounted for by a foolish disposition of theirs to draw on the rogue and vagabond element for their first colonists. The Spanish ambassador, writing to his Government at home, gave the valuable information that the whole Virginia



scheme had been worked up by Sir John Popham, the Chief Justice, "a great Puritan," in order to rid the country of rogues and vagabonds. Don Pedro de Zuñiga was indulging in a dry jest, but all jokes, when even only moderately good, have a basis of truth, and this one had. The England of James I had inherited a large unsettled population which had some excuse for sinking into roguery and vagabondage. The suppression of the religious houses and the spread of enclosures had borne hardly on the poor. London was in especially bad case. Government, frightened by the growth of "the Wen," had forbidden the building of new houses. Yet the opening of the trade to the East, and the general increase of industry after the peace with Spain was made in 1604, had promoted a demand for labour. Of course, men swarmed to where money was to be earned. Equally, of course, multitudes were forced to live in conditions of overcrowding which made decency and health impossible, and honest living hard indeed. The country was exasperated by the pest, and, in a blind and brutal way, tried to procure a remedy by wholesale flogging. The Domestic State Papers contain lists of the names of dozens and scores of men—and women—whipped in country towns for vagrancy.

The Virginia Company did honourably try to find a better way when it aimed, as it deliberately did, at drawing off this evil element, and starting it to live cleanly in a new world. There it would, they fondly hoped, develop habits of industry. The result could only be, and was, to supply Bacon with matter for his most true saying: "It is a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of people and wicked condemned men, to be the people with whom you plant: and not only so, but it spoileth the plantation: for they will

ever live like rogues, and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do mischief, and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country to the discredit of the plantation." The essay on "Plantations" appeared in the edition of 1612. Before that date the Company was already of the same opinion as the philosopher. In 1610 it was writing: ". . . and that experience hath too dearly taught how much and many ways it hurteth to suffer parents to disburden themselves of lascivious sons, masters of bad servants, and wives of ill husbands, and so to clog the business with such an idle crew as did thrust themselves in the last voyage that will rather starve for hunger than lay their hands to labour." It would have required very careful inspection by a large and competent staff to pick out from the unsettled part of the nation those who had not been morally and physically injured beyond cure by vagabondage. The Company had not the time or means to take the needful precautions, and did not at first realise the need. It obtained its settlers as best it could, and too often in the ways confessed by itself. We are also forced to see that the first Virginia plantation gave an opening in an indirect way to scoundrels who were worse than tramps and bull beggars. Some clever fellows were struck by the ingenious idea that if they went about representing that they were empowered to press settlers, they could frighten the weaker sort into bribing them. One of these scamps created such a panic that no less than forty maidens ran away from home and hid themselves, lest they should be kidnapped for Virginia. It was found necessary to take strong measures, including the gallows, with these blackmailers.

Now, having honestly noted that there were spots, and what they were, we can apply ourselves to better things.

The great work of planting Virginia did win through, in spite of the errors of those who had the doing. And a mighty thing it was—the foundation of a people and a State. Kings and statesmen had but small part in it all. England was mewing her mighty youth. Her sons, the average Englishmen, were swarming out at their own costs and hazards intent, every man of them, first and foremost on “a little honest profit for themselves,” but also on augmenting their England nobly. And what they meant to do they did. The historian of the age gives them casual mention. On his stage they are barely visible as supers, or very minor parts at the best. In front and in the glare of the light are “the great” of the age, James I and his Buckingham, Charles I with his Laud and his Strafford, with their diplomacies, their intrigues, their hectorings, and the fine schemes they laid for running England into a mould, and making her keep shape with packthread. The end of all their labour under the sun was failure. The “average Englishmen” were meanwhile making the future Indian Empire possible, and were laying the foundations of our Colonial Empire in America, and of the United States. In their school were trained the men who brought Strafford, Laud, and the King to the block, and who ground the mould they had made among them to powder. In the Virginia Company, and its offshoot the Old Providence Company, and in New England, the opposition which ruined King Charles’s Government was unconsciously, but all the more truly, organised, and the leaders were trained to know one another and act together.

Our Company was divided into a “first colony” with its headquarters in London, and a “second colony” established in the west country at Plymouth. The latter may be left

aside for the present. As royal authority cut its career short in 1623, the Virginia Company never had quarters of its own. The directors met in the house of Nicholas Ferrar in St Syth's Lane, which, or rather the remnant of which, is now Size Lane, by Blackfriars Station. His son, another Nicholas Ferrar, who was afterwards Secretary to the Company, is more commonly remembered as one of the founders, and at all times the director, of the quaint and pathetic religious community of Little Gidding, usually called while it lasted the Protestant or Arminian Nunnery. The father, a wealthy merchant of the same type as Sir Thomas Smythe, was also a pious man, a benefactor of churches, and an endower of charities. The combination was characteristic of the colonial enterprise of the generation. To found English settlements oversea, to increase the commerce of the mother-country, to spread Christianity and erect a home for the form of religion dear to them, were their combined and not incompatible aims. On the commercial or business side, it was naturally their inclination to go to where they could find, or could in time cultivate, such produce as was not to be raised at home. The colony was to be complementary to the mother-country. It followed that they looked by preference to the southern rather than to the northern parts of the extensive territory assigned them by the King, and that before long they would be going still further to the south into the tropics. In that direction they must expect to meet the opposition of the Spaniards.

In 1606 they were not ready to go south of  $34^{\circ}$  N. With all the solid good sense which enlightened their spirit of adventure, the promoters of the Company had sent an "espial" to spy out the land. In 1604 Captain Christopher Newport had gone to survey, and he came back with a good



report. He is one of the most attractive figures among the early founders of Virginia—a capable seaman and honest man, who had been in privateering voyages to the West Indies, who commanded the “first fleet” to Virginia, did much to feed and support the colony in its early struggle, and then passed into the service of the East India Company, and died in Java. He did not publish a book, or pamphlets, and must needs remain a somewhat dim figure. Yet he, and such men as he, did the work. Others who blew their own trumpets won more notice then and since.

The mere mention of the blowing of trumpets makes it obligatory to name another man of mark who sailed in the first fleet to Virginia. Who has not heard of Captain John Smith, of how he was the salvation of the colony, and of how the prayers of Pocahontas, daughter of the Great Emperor of Virginia, Powhatan, saved his life when that ferocious monarch was about to slay him—for all the world just as various daughters of “Admirals of Babylon” had rescued Christian knights in tales of chivalry. He wrote it all in a book, and now serious historians have taken him at his own valuation. In later days historical criticism has been destructively busy with Captain John Smith. Without being prepared to go all the way with Mr Alexander Brown of the *Genesis of the United States*, the most useful book on our subject for this period, and dismiss him as an imposter and “paper tiger,” one is forced to recognise that the critics are largely in the right of it. Fuller, who wrote not long after his death, makes the dry observation that Smith’s reputation had suffered because there was nobody’s word for his achievements except his own. When he is tested by internal evidence and chronology, it becomes plain that he was an English Ferdinand Mendes Pinto. The Portuguese,

who early became a name for a liar, had adventured far and wide. So had Smith. They saw a good deal. They heard more. They were addicted to saying that they had seen what they had only heard. They both rejoiced in being in the limelight, and at a pinch they had no reluctance to lie. The account which Smith gave of his visit to Powhatan at the time is quite incompatible with the tale he told years afterwards when the marriage of Pocahontas to John Rolfe had made her the "talk of the town." The two have a certain value as witnesses to the spirit and atmosphere of their age. They also were children of *virtú*, but they are never to be trusted for matters of fact.

On Saturday, 19th December 1606, Captain Christopher Newport sailed with his three small vessels—the *Sarah* (or *Susan*) *Constant*, his flagship; the *Godspeed* (or *Goodspeed*), Captain Bartholomew Gosnald; and the *Discovery* (or *Discoverer*), Captain John Ratcliffe. They carried six score settlers—or at least that was the estimated number. Newport was the sole authority at sea, but when he had landed the beginners of the "plantation" the rule over them was to pass to a council of six—Edward Maria Wingfield, Bartholomew Gosnald, John Smith, John Ratcliffe, John Martine, George Kendall, as a matter of course. These managers were provided with copious instructions. They were to find a convenient river deep enough to serve as a port, to go up it as far as it supplied water enough for the ships to ride, to come, and to go. One-third of their number was to be told off to stand guard up-stream against the natives. Care was to be taken to conceal any deaths among them from the Indians who were not to be taught to use firearms, still less allowed to possess them. Only the best shots were to be allowed to fire at a mark in the presence of the natives,

lest they should learn that the dreaded gun could miss, whereby their terror would be abated. Another third of the settlers was to be stationed at the mouth of the river to fend off intruders, *i.e.* the Spaniards. All the other "planters" were to be employed in building a storehouse and huts at some convenient spot between the upper and lower guards.

The little squadron cleared the Channel with no great difficulty, thanks, so the passengers thought not without reason, to the good seamanship of Captain Newport. The voyage was prosperous, judging by the standard of the time. The course taken was that which recommended itself to the navigators of 1606. Their experience had been in the West Indies, and they followed the example of the Spaniards, who had worked out a course, the "carrera de Indias," which took them through the Lesser Antilles and then round Cuba on the west, and so back by the Florida Straits and the Gulf Stream. It was the best route for the Spaniards, whose ports were in the West Indies, on the mainland of South America, Central America, and the Gulf of Mexico. But it was a roundabout way for ships steering for a point above 34° N. Newport, no doubt, took it because he feared that if he sailed direct for his chosen landfall he would find the prevalent westerly winds of the North Atlantic against him all along. The longest way round is often the shortest way home by sea as by land, particularly for the sailing ship. So Newport stuck to the trade winds and the breezes he knew among the islands, going by the Canaries, then south-west to the Windward Islands, then north-west by the Mona Passage and the north of San Domingo to the "Chesupioc," for which he was heading. By 1609 the Company had come to think that there must be a better

way. They were the more urgently pressed to put their supposition to the test because they observed that pirates "haunt the fringes of the land." So they did, and so did the privateers of later times, and the submarines of the World War. Therefore, the Company sent Captain Argall, in 1609, with orders to pass well to the west of the Canaries and along or above  $30^{\circ}$  N., and see if he could not reach the "Chesupioc" more rapidly than by the southerly route. He proved that it was perfectly possible, and henceforward ships bound for Virginia passed to the north of the West Indian Islands. The wind was not settled in the west below  $40^{\circ}$  N.

The comfortable passage out was the preliminary to a sad apprenticeship in colonisation. The three ships reached the Chesapeake on 26th April 1607 after a four months' voyage. The *Discourse* of that honourable gentleman George Percy, who was one of the party, sums up the story of the early days in grim words. "Our men were destroyed with cruel diseases as Swellings, Fluxes (dysentery), Burning fevers, and by warres, and some departed suddenly, but for the most part they died of mere famine. There were never Englishmen left in a foreign country in such misery as we were in this new discovered Virginia. We watched every three nights lying on the bare cold ground what weather soever came ; warded all the next day, which brought our men to be most feeble wretches, our food but a small can of barley sod in water to five men a day, our drink cold water taken out of the river, which was at flood very salt, at a low tide full of slime and filth, which was the destruction of many of our men. Thus we lived for the space of five months in this miserable distress, not having five able men to man our bulwarks upon any occasion.



If it had not pleased God to have put a terror in the savage hearts we had all perished by these vile and cruel Pagans, being in that weak state as we were; our men night and day groaning in every corner of the Fort most pitiful to hear. If there were any conscience in men, it would make their hearts bleed to hear the pitiful murmurings and outcries of our sick men without relief ever night and day for the space of six weeks, some departing out of the world, many times three or four in a night, in the morning their bodies trailed out of their cabins like dogs to be buried; in this sort did I see the mortality of divers of our people."

He saw it and we see it. There is no need to retell what was so vividly told by an eye-witness who suffered. That the settlers did not all perish was due to the kindness of the Virginian Indians, who took pity on them, and supplied them with "bread, corn (Indian corn), fish, and flesh in great quantity." Most fortunate it was for this forlorn band of Englishmen that the natives were of the milder type of red men. If they had planted themselves in the neighbourhood of a tribe of the Iroquois stamp, who were not only brutal, but when worked into a fit of blood lust were incapable of pity or fear, they would have been butchered to a man. The Virginians were, after all, savages, and when tempted by the sight of booty to be easily won, or exasperated by some provocation, they did fall on straggling Englishmen and kill them. Still, they were mild and generally timid. As Mr Percy notes, they came to a *modus vivendi* with the white intruders on their hunting-grounds and scanty resources. It must have been now that Powhatan's little "wanton" (the word is used in a good-natured humorous way) Pocahontas, a girl child of ten, enlivened the dreary fort on the river by running in and out in a state of nature and

throwing catherine wheels after the manner common to London street arabs, who ran alongside omnibuses and did their feats for pennies not so very long ago.

The Virginia Company planted its foot, on a most painful standing place certainly, but definitely, on 13th May 1606, when the first settlers began the building of their triangular fort at Jamestown on the James River. Mr Percy has set out the miseries they were to go through for a time. For the present it is enough to record that the London, or Southern, or First Colony Company had made its start, and was fairly at work in the late spring of 1606. The Western or Plymouth branch ran its course side by side with the more important London division, but with very different fortunes.

It would be no exaggeration to say that the Western Company was Sir Ferdinando Gorges, and if not exactly nobody, still hardly anybody else of any importance. This gentleman, who may have been born in 1566 and who certainly lived to 1647, went in his time through many changes of fortune. He had followed the Earl of Essex in the wars by land and sea—and then, up to a certain point, in the agitation which culminated in an insane rebellion. The point at which Gorges decided to follow his patron no further was just where and when it became clear to all cautious men that the Earl would fail. There was a decided shabbiness in the part played by Gorges in this wretched affair. But it must be said to his honour that when he had committed himself to the great adventure of colonising America, he resolutely declined to confess himself beaten by a long series of failures to succeed, and positive losses. He acted on the faith that it is “dogged as does it.” His disappointments began early. In 1606 he, with the help

of Sir John Popham, the Chief Justice, a favourer of these enterprises, sent two vessels to gather information, with orders to make for Cape Breton by a northern route across the Atlantic. One obeyed orders, but her fortunes are obscure. She came back with a good survey of the coast made by her captain, Hanham, and perhaps the cost of sending her out was repaid in part or wholly by a cargo of timber and "sassafrass," which was then much valued as an anti-scorbutic. Captain Hanham was told to meet the other explorer who had sailed before him. His colleague had, however, adopted a line which made it quite impossible that this part of his instructions should be carried out.

"Mr Henry Challons, gentleman," had sailed on 12th August 1606, in command of the *Richard* of Plymouth, a small vessel of fifty-five tons "or thereabout." He had the same orders as Hanham, but he disobeyed them. Instead of going to Cape Breton along a high latitude, he took the southern route through the West Indies. His decision, and the consequences it had for him, have a good deal to tell us of the conditions in which all enterprise at sea in those waters, and at that period, were conducted. We are forced to suspect that Mr Henry Challons knew how pirates haunt the fringes of the land, and went into the Antilles not of course to be taken by a sea-rover himself, but in the hopes of picking up a Spanish prize. That would be a way of "making his voyage" in the sense the words then bore. To make your voyage was to secure a profitable cargo by purchase, barter, or capture. He might be punished when he got back, but it was long odds that the authorities at home would hear nothing about his doings, and he could rely on winning public sympathy at Plymouth. If this was his calculation, then the would-be biter was bit.

The *Richard* was taken into the Caribbean Sea by Santa Lucia, thirty degrees and more south of her ultimate destination, Cape Breton. They worked up the west side of the Antilles, trading for food, fruit, and tobacco to make their voyage. They heard of a disaster which had befallen certain English sailors in the year before. Several of them had been butchered by Caribs. At Dominica they rescued a Franciscan friar, one of a body of missionaries sent out by the King of Spain to convert the islanders. Brother Blas was his name, and he told them how his brethren had been slain, and he himself kept as a captive and a slave. Pitying his case, the Englishmen gave him a passage to Porto Rico. Then they worked to the northward till, on the 10th of November, in latitude  $27^{\circ}$  N. and in bad weather, they ran into the midst of a Spanish convoy and were captured. According to the Spanish theory, all foreigners found in the Indies were pirates. The officer in command of the convoy opened fire on the *Richard* at once. She was knocked about rather severely. A small craft with a crew of twenty-nine could make no serious fight. Mr Stoneman, mate of the *Richard*, who tells the tale, says that the Spaniards who took possession treated him and his messmates brutally. But he says also, and there is abundant evidence to bear him out, that he found the convoy wretchedly manned and appointed. It is the fact, and one which goes a long way to account for the course of events in the Indies, that misgovernment, ill-usage, and unspeakably bad economic conditions had nearly destroyed the seafaring population of Spain, which, indeed, had never been large. Therefore, though a great pretence of excluding all foreigners from the Spanish dominions was made, the galleons were full of Levantines, Flemings, and even Englishmen. Stoneman



himself was asked to navigate the flagship as it approached home.

When they were brought to Seville at last, they were not on the whole badly treated. The "Adelantado," *i.e.* Lord Lieutenant, of Andalusia, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, even showed them some kindness. Stoneman, who reports acts of brutality by subordinates, calls him "the good Duke." There were English and Dutch merchants (though Spain was still in open war with the Netherlands) who were living and carrying on their business in Seville. After a time the prisoners—or nearly all of them—got away. The whole story is characteristic of the alternate peremptoriness, and now and then ferocity, of the Spaniards on the one hand, and their slackness and easy-going indifference on the other. But it also supplies examples of the withering of energy and resources in Spain, which was to grow ever worse as the country was reduced to a hollow outward show of power, or, as the seventeenth century was fond of saying, to a skeleton held together by wire. We must bear this feebleness in mind in order to understand how it was possible for small handfuls of English, Dutch, and French to force an entry into the King of Spain's territory, and hold their ground in defiance of his Viceroys and Captains-General.

In 1607, the year after the misfortune of the *Richard*, a deplorably ill-fated attempt to colonise in North America at Sagadahoc was made by the Western Company. Sagadahoc was the name then given to the Kennebec River in Maine. The leaders were incompetent; George Popham, a relative of the Lord Chief Justice, because he was fat, awkward, and timid; Raleigh Gilbert, his colleague, because though courageous he was feather-headed. They landed a few colonists, but, as their storehouse was burnt in midwinter,

they suffered extreme misery. When better weather returned, they all came away. For years the Western Company—that is to say, Sir Ferdinand Gorges—was chiefly occupied in sending out fishing ventures, and vessels to trade for timber, sassafrass, and peltry. They kept our hold on the coast; as they never ceased going, it is to be presumed that at least they paid their way. But another element had to be introduced before genuine colonisation became possible in the northern part of “Virginia” as defined by King James’s charter.

## CHAPTER IV

### TAKING HOLD

IN the first years of the seventeenth century our two great Chartered Companies had taken hold of the fields whereon they were to found a great Empire and a mighty nation. They went forth in opposite directions, one east, the other west. They worked simultaneously but apart, except in so far that both led the expansion of England, and that the same names are to be found in the list of the governors of each of them. Sir Thomas Smythe, of whom it has been justly said that he lived the greatest life of any known merchant, was Governor of both the East India and the Virginia Company, and had been Chief of the Smyrna. Of whom else among traders can it be said that he helped to organise a national trade to the Mediterranean, to begin founding an empire in the East and a colonial power of unrivalled magnitude in America? He was, moreover, entrusted with a diplomatic mission in Russia. And there were others whose achievements were less varied, but who were active east and west. Apart from these personal links, the two companies were but little connected and must be treated apart. Precedence must be given to the East Indian, which started first. But, while the two English associations are to be taken independently, the Dutch "Maatschapij" worked so closely with the London Company, in friendly co-operation, in mere trading rivalry, and for

one period of years in savage conflicts, that their stories are for long inseparable.

When they started all but simultaneously they had the same goal. It was to reach and to tap the wealth of the Spice Islands. In them was to be gained the key to the whole trade of the East and to much of Europe. Whoever had spices to offer for sale had a security that he would find purchasers. Much lay on the way, and not a little beyond, and the time soon came when the spice trade fell to being a minor part of the whole commerce of Europe with and in the East. A brief survey of the whole vast region beyond the Cape of Good Hope is here in place, and is indispensable for a due understanding of our subject.

The starting-place for a rapid account of what the two companies had before them is Table Bay. They called it at first Saldanha from the Portuguese navigator who had discovered it a century before. The Saldanha Bay to the north, now so named, was ignored for a long while. But to avoid possible confusion it is safest to keep to Table Bay. The Portuguese, who dreaded the Cape, gave it a wide berth. The more seamanlike English and Dutch saw its value as a half-way house, and a port where fresh water and meat could be obtained easily and at a cheap rate. The vocabulary of the trade was short and simple—with "Moo" for cattle, and "Baa" for sheep, the Hottentots could be made to understand what was wanted. The display of a bag of nails showed them what they were to expect in return. The fresh meat was of infinite value to seafaring men when scurvy was the constant pest of long sea voyages. The nails were a boon to the Hottentot, who had no metals. So Table Bay became a stopping-place, even a basis of operation, where English and Dutch met as friends and fellow-seamen—



and that without prejudice to their readiness to fight far away in the Indian Archipelago. They feasted and danced together. They carried one another's letters, and helped one another to naval stores on reasonable terms. When the bay was found to be empty, they put up a sign, and hid letters in a *cache* to be there till the next-comer homeward or outward bound was blown along. The Portuguese made no more fatal mistake than their neglect to plant a colony at Table Bay. It would have been a protection to all their other posts.

When round the Cape, all intruders on the monopoly of "the conquest and trade of India" knew that they would find Portugal standing guard over the native market as best she could. She strove to keep her hold by means of ports so strong that they could not be taken except by regular siege operations, by battery and mine, which armed trading squadrons had not the means to undertake. It is not necessary to mention every little post. Some of them played no part in the story. But the chief "strengths" of the Portuguese were of real importance. On the east coast of Africa was the first-class fortress on the island of Mozambique which was to guard the channel. It was a strong place, as the Dutch found to their cost when they tried to carry it by a rush. Sofala and Mombasa were of less consequence. Portugal had failed to establish a hold on the Red Sea. That still lay open to native trade, and was soon to be visited by the newcomers. On the south east of Arabia there was a massive fort at Muscat; Ormuz, another first-class fortress, lay at the entry to the Persian Gulf. Then, going south, came Diu, a strong place at the southern point of the Kathiawar Peninsula. A string of towns occupied by garrisons seemed to obstruct all entry by com-

petitors into India from the Gulf of Cambaya to Colombo. Goa, the seat of the Viceroy and his headquarters, lay in the middle of the line on the mainland. The Ghats, the mountains of Western India, served as a support to them behind. All along this coast the Portuguese were stronger than elsewhere. Their weak point was in the Gulf of Cambaya where the Tapti river falls into the sea. It was too full of sands and rapids to be navigable by vessels of any size, but Surat, at about eight miles from the mouth, was the port of the greatest power in India, the Mogul Empire. The Portuguese were quite unable to wage war on land with the Great Mogul, but, as he had no fleet, they could blockade the entry to the river.

Beyond Colombo in the Bay of Bengal the Portuguese had stations at Meliapur, Negapatam, and Masulapatam. They tended to be nests of piracy where a worthless half-breed population swarmed. Beyond the Bay of Bengal the Portuguese posts grew few and lay far apart. But the first to be met with by ships coming from the west, the city of Malacca, was another first-class fortress.

Its strength was in its walls. Portugal never gained any control over the great islands of the Indian Archipelago. Again and again in the sixteenth century Malacca had been brought to the verge of starvation by the war galleys of the Sultans of Achin and Pedir in Sumatra, of Bantam in Java, and of Johore on the Malay Peninsula. But these native potentates could never act together for long, and they were helpless in face of the solid walls of Malacca. It invariably held out till it was relieved by galleons from Goa. The shores of the Gulf of Siam, of Cambaya, and of China were under the control of native powers. In the Moluccas the Portuguese had a fort at Tidore, and another at Timor.

Beyond were the Spanish possessions in the Philippines, from which, after the union of Spain and Portugal in 1580, help could be expected. North-west from the Philippines the Portuguese had a strong post at Macao. After years of piracy and brutal outrage visited by severe retaliation, they had learnt that China was too strong to be cowed by them. So they adopted the wiser course of making themselves useful to the Viceroy at Canton. They had been allowed to settle and even fortify themselves at Macao—under rigid supervision by the Mandarins, and on onerous terms.

It is obvious that a long drawn-out line of this fragmentary character could easily be pierced here and there by active assailants. Malacca, for instance, was an excellent example of the utter inability of a fortress on shore to “command” the water in front of its bastions. English and Dutch Indiamen could sail past it out of range of its guns. But they had no need to come within scores of miles of it. The far more convenient route for them, whether they were bound to east or to west, was by the Straits of Sunda between Sumatra and Java. Command of the sea is a silly phrase when it is used to mean anything except the superiority of the better fleet. In the Gulf of Cambaya again, whoever could beat the Portuguese on the water could send his goods up the Tapti to Surat in lighters, or find another opening.

There was, too, a condition in the Far East which was peculiar and was singularly favourable to English and Dutch alike. The kidnappings, murderings, and pillagings of such men as the scoundrel Simon Perez d’Andrade, and others who followed him, had rooted an incurable hatred and distrust of all “outside red devils” in the minds of the Chinese. They refused to allow the brutes into their ports, and who can blame them? But the rulers of China

never went so far as did the Tokugawa Shoguns in Japan. A certain clearness of head, which is a note of the Japanese, taught the Shoguns that in order to win seclusion it is not enough to stop the entry of foreigners if you do not also prevent the emigration of your own people. After 1633 no Japanese man or ship was allowed to go out bound to any foreign country. The Chinese rulers were not so thorough. They never effectually prevented—and perhaps did not wish to prevent—their merchants from going out with their junks in search of wealth. And go they did. In 1600, and before and later on, the sea from Manila to Malacca was crossed and recrossed by a swarm of junks. The skippers and traders of China would go anywhere, and trade with anybody. The English or Dutch “Cape Merchant” or ‘ ‘Opper Koopman,” with his staff of factors, could buy from the Chinese what he could not obtain direct from the Malays. They could make up an insufficient cargo of spices by buying raw silks or porcelain out of the junks. They gave goods in return, or they paid in *reales de á ocho*, which we called “pieces of eight.” The *real de á ocho* was the standard of value in the Far East, and was the gift Spain had made to the commerce of the world. By a unique breach of her usual colonial policy, Spain allowed the export of bullion and coined money from Mexico and Peru to Manila. It was distributed mainly by the Chinese. The “real” was bought by us at fifty pence, and was in fact a dollar. This trade carried on in quiet roadsteads or bays in neutral Malay towns, or in islands chosen as exchanges and marts, was no secret, and was not denied by the Chinese. When Wybrand van Warwijck, commander of the first fleet sent out by the Dutch Company constituted in 1602, came to the coast of China, and applied for leave to trade at



Canton, the Mandarins declined to let him come in. It was, they said, against the laws of the Empire to admit foreigners. But Chinese merchants visited him freely, and they told him that if he would meet them at Patani in the Malay Peninsula they would do business. Patani, now decayed and insignificant, was then a meeting-place for merchants from Africa and Persia on one side, and China on the other.

There is little which concerns us to be said of Japan. Her ports were not as yet shut, but the time was at hand when her door would be closed to all emigrants without exception, and to all visitors from without except the Dutch, who were allowed to send a ship once a year to one appointed spot. Japanese were to be found all over the Indian Archipelago till 1633, but not as traders. They were known, valued, or feared, as soldiers of fortune and pirates.

Before ever their charter was given to them, the merchants of London were getting ready to play their part in this busy world of trade and adventure. News was coming to them of a kind to stimulate their ambition. The second expedition sent by the old Company of Amsterdam had sailed in 1598. It consisted of eight ships and was commanded by Jacob van Neck, who had with him two able lieutenants, Wybrand van Warwijck and Jacob van Heemskerck. They sailed together, but beyond the Cape they divided for exploration and trade. Some of them went as far as the Spice Islands, and they came back in detachments, but all returned in safety, bringing such cargoes as "had never been seen since Holland was Holland." The total profits were 400 per cent., and now there followed a rush of simultaneous voyages. Soon the Dutch were everywhere from Achin in Sumatra to Amboyna in the Moluccas, trading and taking Portuguese prizes. One capture made by Heemskerck yielded more

than 3,389,772 florins, £260,000 or so. Blood and not water ran in the veins of the merchants of London, and they were resolute to share.

A syndicate was formed, money collected, and a special body of "committees," *i.e.* directors, was chosen to buy and fit out ships, select officers, and frame instructions. Their order-book has survived, and may be read in Mr Steven's *Dawn of British Trade in the East*. The committees had to provide such goods as they hoped would sell well. But commerce with the East has from the time of the Romans to our own been conducted largely by exporting bullion. Leave had to be obtained from Government to send coin out of the country. "Reales" had to be sought and found in foreign ports and, of course, by smuggling or by buying them in France, where Philip II had been lavishing his treasures in support of the League.

The purchase of the ships took some bargaining. The largest they bought was the *Malice Scourge*, built by the Earl of Cumberland for privateering ventures against Spain. The Earl, whose enterprises had left him deeply in debt, asked £4000. The merchants offered £3000, but when he broke off indignantly they offered £200 more. At that price they secured her, as being of the burden of 600 tons. The measurement was a formality. The *Malice Scourge*, soon to be renamed the *Red Dragon* and then the *Dragon*, was probably larger. We find her estimated as of 600 and also of 800 tons. The £3200 was not all the Company had to spend on her. She needed a complete overhaul from stem to stern. When repaired she proved to be well worth the money, and she lasted for years. The next ship in order of size was the *Hector*, of 300 tons. The *Susan*, of 260 tons, had been built for privateering by

Alderman Banyng. She was a bad bargain, for she went rotten.

It would be amusing enough to go all over the story of the preparation, the purchases of beef, of biscuit, of cheese, of beer, of wine and strong waters, of arms and powder. It was all done "ship-shape and Bristol board." No squadron by whomsoever fitted out ever left the Channel better provided and cared for than the Company's first voyage. The "committees" were, indeed, men of business, who knew that the cheap and the makeshift are always costly in the end. And they knew no less thoroughly that their venture must stand or fall by the guidance it was to receive on its way.

Nothing is more to the honour of the clear-headed men who met in Sir T. Smythe's mansion in Philpot Lane, than their choice of their officer. The post of "General" of such an expedition was worth having. Suppose it took such a prize as had fallen to Jacob van Heemskerck? There was no lack of gentlemen who had been at the wars who would right gladly have served the Company. One such candidate, Sir Edward Michelborne, was strongly recommended by Lord Treasurer Buckhurst, Burleigh's successor. The committees began by evading the request, and when it was repeated, replied with decision that they did not intend to employ any "gentleman," and would beg the Lord High Treasurer to allow them to "sort their business with men of their own condition." This has sometimes been taken to be an example of a class hostility. But if the committees had objected *simpliciter* to gentlemen they would not have been pleased to have Sir T. Smythe as Governor. The objection was personal. Michelborne had served campaigns in the Low Countries and had been on an island voyage with the

Earl of Essex. He was a man about town and the court, who had neither the training nor the character needed for the work in hand. But the committees could not well say so without giving offence. So they based their refusal on general grounds. Michelborne himself could not take "mustard in the nose," because he was called a gentleman.

In fact, the Company had already chosen its officer, and that most wisely. James Lancaster had been a merchant in Portugal and a soldier. After he sailed to the East with Raymond, he had commanded a very miscellaneous force of English privateers, French sea-rovers, and Dutch adventurers—most of them, even of the English, being under no obligation whatever to obey him—in a most successful attack on Pernambuco. He had training, varied experience, and a proved capacity to lead. He had that which men call authority. Nothing is known of his origin, but there were gentlemen who did not write as good letters as he did, and had no share of his faculty for government.

In April Lancaster was in the Downs with his "fleet" waiting for a change of the wind to go down Channel. Here is the constitution of the handful of ships about to sail (see p. 77), as they knew, on a modest mission to promote the good of the realm by the "trade of merchandise"—and also, as they did not know, to begin preparing the way for the British Empire in India.

It will be seen that the dominating element among these men was the commercial. Lancaster was the highest authority for the trade and navigation alike. But the "factor" is above the sailing master. The entire staff of "supercargoes," as they would have been called in later times, divided into first, second, third, fourth "factors" and a number of "writers." The factors were paid an



allowance for their outfit, £100 to the first class, £50 to the second, £30 to the third, and £20 to the fourth. The Company also gave them an "adventure" in the voyage—£200, a full share, to the first factors, £100 to the second, £50 to the third, and £40 to the fourth.

Ships.	Commanders.	Men.	Tons.
<i>The Red Dragon</i>	James Lancaster, General; John Davis, Pilot Major; Com. Proudhurst, Sailing Master.	180	800
<i>The Hector</i>	John Middleton, Vice-Admiral and Principal Factor; H. Napper, Sailing Master.	100	300
<i>Ascension</i>	Wm. Brund, Principal Factor; Roger Hankin, Master.	80	260
<i>Susan</i>	J. Havard, Principal Factor; S. Spencer, Sailing Master.	80	240
<i>The Quest Pinnacle</i>	to carry extra stores	40	100
		500	1500

This commercial staff did not in theory form part of the crew. They were there to do the merchants' business when they did reach a port. They were also there to be left behind to set up a "factory" and collect goods for the next "fleet" which was to come along. But the line was not quite precisely drawn between trader and sailor. At a pinch, as for instance when scurvy was raging in the ship, the factors and their writers had to take their "tick" at the wheel, and when the need was dire, to go aloft "into the

tops." The gravity of history may pass over these details, but it is an acknowledged prig. We want to see these brave men of old, and the fathers who begot us, as they lived and worked. It is something to know that the outlay for provisions in the first voyage was:

		£	s.	d.
Bread . . . . .	16 months	1028	8	0
Meal . . . . .	4 "	267	17	4
Beer, cider, and wine . .	20 "	2150	0	0
Meat . . . . .	17 "	1721	8	6
Cheese, butter . . . . .	20 "	1511	16	0
		<hr/>		
		6679	9	10
		<hr/>		

The sack and the bread were in reasonable proportion.

That which they carried out with them to sell, exchange, or invest, was divided into goods to the value of £6860 and in coined money to £21,742. The expenses incurred before they sailed for cost of ships and their outfit was £39,771. The total sum contributed by the adventurers as capital is said to have been £72,000. So there can have been but a trifling reserve left in the chest in Philpot Lane. There was never any considerable difficulty in securing Spanish reales. The King of Spain was forced to hand on the treasure which came to him from "the Indies" (generally in the form of coins struck in the mints of Mexico and Peru), for the payment of his troops in the Low Countries, or to clear off his debts to his Genoese bankers. The money was paid out as fast as it came in, and of course it circulated in commerce. If English and Dutch men of business could not get the silver ready coined, they had an easily found resource. They had "reales" coined in the mints of their own countries out of the silver they obtained in bars. This was notorious. The

Portuguese in the East tried to discredit their enemies by telling native rulers that the coins offered them by Dutch and English were false. So, in a sense, they were. But a Sultan of Achin, who had been warned that the Dutch were giving him false money, caused a number of their "reales" to be cut in two. It was found that they were made of silver, and were quite equal in weight and fineness to those minted in Mexico or Peru. He decided that they would serve his turn.

The goods Lancaster took out, and so did those who followed him, were iron, tin, wrought and unwrought, Devonshire kerseys, Norwich stuffs—and "smaller articles." The sailors, who were allowed to improve their wages by little ventures, contributed "smaller articles." They soon found that none were more secure of a ready sale than sword blades. And all looked to bring back "spices, musk, ambergris, wax, camphor, opium, silks, cloths, and precious stones." There was one kind of export which it would have been rash indeed to overlook, namely, presents to be made to native potentates. Lancaster's ships carried pieces of plate, some of them of the weight of 205, 102, 63, and 32 ounces, together with fans, plumes, looking-glasses, and armour. This question of the presents was an important matter for long with the companies. They had to propitiate "the great" with gifts at home, and human nature was human nature in the East.

All this wealth was to be protected by the Company's men alone. Therefore all ships went armed. When the *Dragon* belonged to the Earl of Cumberland she carried a weight in guns equal to the armament of a 12-pounder 32-gun frigate of the times of Nelson. The Company discarded her two demy cannons—33 pounders—as being too heavy. The

rest of her armament—16 culverins, 12 demy culverins, and 8 sakers—was apparently retained. The others were armed in proportion.

The question of authority was extremely important. Who was to control these 500 men or so away on the other side of the world, and by what right? That some of the sailors, and even factors, would prove unruly was to be expected. There was much unruliness in the Elizabethan world, kept in order at home by a grèat deal of hanging and flogging. The commanders—the general above all—and the captains of the various ships were authorised to enforce martial law over all their subordinates. Every general carried a commission from the Crown. He was to punish crimes, following as nearly as he could the procedure of the courts at home. In the long run and in remote seas all would depend on his ability to secure the support of a majority of his crew large enough to overawe the unruly element. A weak or oppressive captain might be paralysed by mutiny. It speaks highly for the ability and character of the Company's commanders that a long time passed before we hear of rebellion. We do hear of men brought to trial for murders, tried and executed according to the practice of the courts at home as near as might be. The captain, the Cape merchant or chief factor, the sailing master, and the chaplain (for there was always a chaplain) formed the Court. A jury was chosen out of the crew, and the prisoners were brought to the mainmast. Their crime stated and the evidence produced, the jury gave their verdict, and then it was just "take him away, or them, and let them hear the chaplain." The end was the yard-arm. There is abundant evidence that these juries, who at one time or another met from Hirado in Japan to Aden in the Red Sea, never shrank



from giving a verdict of guilty even when the victim of the crime was a Dutchman.

Now we can start with Lancaster and go with him to the East. He left the Thames with his four ships on the 13th February 1601 (N.S.). By the old style, which counted the year as beginning on the 25th March, it was 1600. Head winds delayed him in the Channel, and the Canaries were not sighted till 5th May. The course was then S.W. A Portuguese prize laden with wine was met and plundered but allowed to go on. Calms delayed them again, and the line was not crossed till the last day in June. The little victualler, the *Quest*, was "discharged" on the coast of Brazil, her stores and men were transferred to the other ships, and as much of her tackle as was worth keeping. The bare hull was cast adrift. On the 9th of September they reached Table Bay, by which time the scurvy was raging in all the ships except the *Dragon*, so that the factors had to take their tick at the wheel, and lend a hand all round because the men were mostly down. The *Dragon* was in better case than any of the others because Lancaster had distributed lemon juice as an anti-scorbutic. There is neither lime nor lemon which will entirely exclude scurvy. And it was in the *Dragon* too. Still, she was able to lend help to bring the afflicted vessels to an anchor. The air of the land, and fresh meat bought from the Hottentots, put all right—for a time. They left Table Bay on the 29th October, and steered for the Indian Archipelago. The route was by the east of Madagascar. Then the scurvy broke out again, and it was necessary to seek more fresh meat in the island. At the Bay of Anton Gil, three of the officers, including a surgeon, and ten men died. While the bodies were being taken ashore for burial an incident occurred, too

characteristic of the age to be omitted. It was the almost incredibly reckless practice of the time to fire salutes with shotted guns. When the funeral salute was fired a cannon ball struck the boat of the *Ascension*, killing the captain and another man. A notice on a rock told the English seamen that a Dutch squadron had just preceded them.

From Anton Gil, Lancaster steered for the islands by the route he knew of from the Portuguese—that is to say, along the sixth to tenth degree of south latitude. He was not past the Nicobar Islands till the 29th May, and did not reach Achin till the 5th June—one year and four months after he left the Thames. The route was good enough for the Portuguese, who were bound up the Bay of Bengal and to Malacca. But it was not the best for ships bound to the south-west of Achin or the Straits of Sunda, and so the Dutch came to think. In 1611 Captain Brouwer decided to try whether by running along the thirtieth parallel of south latitude before the brave westerly breezes which blow steadily all the year round, till it was judged that she was on or near the longitude of Sunda, and then steering to the northward, it would be possible to make a shorter passage. The experiment showed that the hypothesis was sound, and this was the route they took in future. Dirck Hertog, skipper of the *Endracht* of Amsterdam, was following this route in 1616 when he accidentally discovered Western Australia.

Lancaster found Dutch factors established at Achin, and he also found native ships from Guzerat with fabrics to exchange for spices. It was a trade we and the Dutch were to share in before long. For the moment the most pressing work was to secure a treaty with Achin, and to “make the voyage” by trade partly, but by capture from the

Portuguese also, if occasion served. The treaty presented no great difficulty. Ala Uddin, the Sultan of Achin and Pedir, was very old; he was ninety-five, and no less wicked. He had won the throne by murdering his predecessor, Mansur and his family. As he was in difficulties with the Portuguese, he showed Lancaster the bland side of his character. The General and his officers were invited to dinner. Lancaster watered his "rice wine"—that is, arrack—copiously, an example his countrymen would have done well to follow more closely than they did. Ala Uddin was extremely gracious. He "caused his demosels to come forth and dance, and his women to play music to them, and these women were richly attired and adorned with bracelets and jewels, and this they account a great favour, for these are not usually seen of any but such as the King will greatly honour."

Politeness, exchanges of presents, and the loan of elephants to carry them and Lancaster on his visits, all was as pleasant as could be. The Sultan was always open to do a friendly action. He entered with glee into a scheme to hoodwink and kidnap a Portuguese agent on the spot who was likely to send a warning to Malacca. Choosing his time well, Lancaster sailed for the Straits. He was accompanied by Joris (George) van Spilbergh, one of the best of the Dutch captains. They met at Achin and, as the peoples had not as yet begun fighting for the Spice Islands, and England was at war with Spain and Portugal, they could act together. The insatiable old Ala Uddin particularly requested Lancaster to bring him a good-looking Portuguese girl as his share in the prize. Early in October a richly laden galleon coming from Bengal was captured. By the terms of their agreement one-eighth of the prize fell to Spilbergh.

And now Lancaster had made his voyage with the help of trade at Priaman and elsewhere. After a second visit to Achin and more civilities with the Sultan, who, however, did not get the prize he wanted, the General went by the Straits of Sunda to Bantam. Here, as at Achin, there was an exchange of compliments and presents. The Bantamese ruler was a small boy, and all power was in the hands of a Regent. Here John Middleton, the Vice-Admiral, died suddenly, the first of three gallant brothers who served the Company on sea and land, and ended their lives in the East. John and, a few years later, Henry died at Bantam, which was the grave of the English, and David by shipwreck off the coast of Madagascar.

The voyage home was long and trying. In the South Atlantic the *Dragon* unshipped her rudder in bad weather, and was for a space at the mercy of wind and waves. Lancaster thought his case so serious that he ordered the *Hector*, the only ship then with him, to part company, and make the best of her way home, with a very cheerful and manly letter to the Company. The damage was happily made good, and the *Dragon* reached the Downs on the 11th December 1603. She was preceded by the *Ascension* with a cargo.

This voyage has been told somewhat fully, not only because it was the first and therefore the most important, but because it was typical. What has been said here as to outfit, organisation, and movements applies to all the voyages—*mutatis mutandis*. They were commanded by other men, and sailed for other ports, but all was done in the same way. It may not, however, be superfluous to note that down to the year 1612 the Company sent out £138,127 in coin, while the goods sent were estimated at only £62,413, a disproportion which filled the orthodox economists of that generation



with horror. The land, they protested in one long howl, was being drained of its wealth.

While the *Dragon* and her consorts were going and returning, the Netherlanders were busy far and wide in the islands. Lancaster had learnt from the message painted on the rocks at Anton Gil that at least one expedition from the Low Countries was sailing on the same route as himself. In fact, three had sailed almost at the same time. Two of them were in the service of the United Old and New Companies of Amsterdam. Jacob van Heemskerck sailed on the 23rd April 1601, just as Lancaster was clearing the Channel. The squadron consisted of eight ships, which came back in detachment by the spring of 1604. At the same time the same company sent out Wolphart Hermenszoon with five sail, which all returned home in the spring of that year. The third venture was fitted out by the enterprising, the in fact too hopefully and diversely enterprising, Baltazar Moucheron of Veere. It was commanded by that Joris van Spilbergh whom Lancaster met at Achin. All therefore belonged to those private companies which preceded—and then were, either of their own free will, or under the gentle compulsion of the States General, combined to form the great Netherland “Maatschapij.” They prepared the way, but they did not belong to a Chartered Company.

The body, which was to be a little our friend, and a great deal our rival and enemy, was officially constituted in 1602. It naturally drew its men from among those who had served the private companies. Where else could it have found the needful experience and the proved ability? Its first fleet was commanded by Wybrand van Warwijck, and consisted of fourteen ships. Three of them—those contributed by the State of Zeeland—were under the direct authority of

Sebald de Weert. Warwijck went on to Bantam, which he reached on the 29th April 1603, before Lancaster anchored in the Downs. De Weert, who sailed a little before Warwijck, was a man of ideas. Perhaps before he sailed, but certainly in the course of his voyage, he became possessed by the conviction that the true policy for the Company was to aim at Ceylon, drive out the Portuguese, and set up a headquarters at Colombo. If the Bewindhebbers had followed that course, the events of the next few years in the Eastern Sea must have been other than they were to be. That the thing could have been done may be assumed to be certain—but not with three ships. De Weert visited the coast of the island and negotiated with the Rajah of Kandy, who had already been visited by Spilbergh. He soon found that the Rajah was in fierce conflict with the Portuguese at Colombo. Here there seemed to be an excellent opening. De Weert paid a visit to Achin, and returned with three more ships to Ceylon, and with, so it appears, a plan in his head to get Colombo in alliance with the Rajah. His promising looking venture was at the best premature. It brought him only death by a very vile assassination. The Rajah's conduct shows that he might have been—nay, certainly would have been—rejoiced by the expulsion of the Portuguese, but that he had no wish to see the Netherlanders take their place. He was profusely polite. An Oriental is never more civil than when he distrusts and is hatching mischief. The ignorance of some of the Dutch sailors who gave deep offence by killing cows—a sheer sacrilege in the opinion of the Singhalese—caused bad blood between them. But the immediate cause of the coming disaster was more honourable to Sebald de Weert. He had taken Portuguese prizes which had surrendered without resistance. The Dutch had little

scruple about killing a whole Portuguese crew when they were provoked—no more, in fact, than their enemy had in hanging any of them, when the thing could be done with safety. But in this case the Portuguese had been received to quarter, and had been given a guarantee of security for their lives. When the Rajah asked that they should be handed over to him, Sebald de Weert refused. To give up prisoners who held his safe conduct to a barbarian who would probably butcher them was one of those actions which no decent officer could sink to. Later the Dutch came to the conclusion that the Rajah really meant to exchange these prisoners for certain Singhalese then in the hands of the Portuguese. He was deeply offended by the refusal, but he smiled, and smiled, and invited the Admiral to dinner, together with some of his staff. At the table they were murdered. To the Rajah this was a political episode like another. He saw no reason why the Netherlands should not go on treating with him, and was probably surprised when they left the coast and sailed to join Warwijck.

What happened now is the beginning of another story.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIGHT FOR THE ISLANDS

THE contemporary voyages of Lancaster and Warwijck were, though neither of them knew what he was doing, the beginning of a fierce struggle for the control of the Indian Archipelago. It was the fortune of the Netherland Company to hold nearly all the trumps, and as time went on the Bewindhebbers were ever more resolute to play the rigour of the game. It was a disadvantage to the merchants of London that King James I made peace with Spain and Portugal in 1604. The country on the whole gained by the ending of the war, for privateering had not compensated for the loss of trade. But in the Indian Archipelago the London Company was hampered by the cessation of hostilities. The merchants did not at first clearly understand that this was the case. They were justly confident of their ability to outsail and undersell the Portuguese. So they were prepared to obey the directions which King James never failed to put into the commissions issued to their "generals"—to abstain from all acts of hostility against the subjects of princes in amity with His Majesty. But the Dutch did not make peace in 1604, nor even so much as make a truce till 1609. Therefore, they were free to assail the Portuguese and dispossess them of their ports, and where they conquered they were minded to hold in full sovereignty—and to monopolise the trade. Their rapidly matured and re-



solutely pursued policy was to obtain sole command of the Spice Islands, and such control of the whole Indian Archipelago as would enable them to keep all competitors in strict subordination.

Nor was this all. The Netherland Company, with its great joint stock and the steady aid of the States General, could act on a scale altogether beyond the reach of the merchants of London, who were compelled to rely on their own resources alone, were distrusted by Parliament, and soon detested by other traders and men of business, who resented their monopoly so soon as the Eastern trade was shown to be profitable. Nothing could well be more unfair than the reproaches of Robert Cecil, the future Earl of Salisbury, who blamed them for not equalling the enterprise of their rivals. How great the difference between the scale on which the two acted can be shown most conveniently and with the greater economy of words by a short comparative table of their respective ventures during the first phase of the struggle.

English Voyages.		Dutch Voyages.	
Date.	Number of Ships.	Date.	Number of Ships.
1601	4	1602	15
1604	4	1603	15
1607	3	1605	11
1608	2	1606	9
1609	1	1607	15
	14		65

Of course, neither Company had the whole number out at one and the same time. Moreover, the figures do not stand for different ships. The same vessel might be included in successive voyages. But it is manifest that the Netherland Company had, through those eight years, more than four times as many carriers going and returning as had the merchants of London. That alone was enough to give it a visible superiority. It would serve no useful purpose to prolong the comparative lists. After 1609 the Dutch ceased to work by fleets, and appointed their first Governal-General, Pieter Both, and henceforth their business was directed by a single central authority on the spot in the East.

A much larger book than this would very soon be filled if it were to contain an account of all the movements of all those ships, and the reader would be merely confused among details. One main thread runs through all that was to happen in the Archipelago down to 1623, and carries the lesser strings with it.

Wybrand van Warwijck began the work of taking possession when he persuaded the Regent, who ruled in the name of the Sultan at Bantam, to allow him to lease a piece of ground and build on it a stone factory and magazine for goods, well walled. The stone was very important, for Bantam was wholly built of wood and bamboo. It was most liable to fire, and, indeed, the foreign factors and their goods had been in real danger from that cause. Fires on a large scale were common. Moreover, a stone factory was just a disguised fort, and that was not the least of its merits in the eyes of Europeans who might have, and did have, good reasons for standing on guard against violence and exactions. Warwijck showed good ability as a diplomatist and manager. When he could not obtain such good terms in the matter of

import dues and port charges as he would have liked, he would take what was tolerable. If the kind of settlement he reached with the Bantamese ruler did not prove permanent, the fault was not his but the native prince's. They would not consider themselves bound by any treaty, and they would have recourse to extortion whenever they lost their tempers, as they often did, or were in need of money, as they frequently were.

Having come to such an arrangement as would do for the time, the Dutch Admiral loaded several of his ships and sent them home. Then he made a sweeping all-round voyage as far as China, trading where he could, and arranging meeting-places with the Chinese *sangleys*, i.e. merchants, when he was not allowed to enter their home ports. His successors did the same. We will in future take that for granted, and spare ourselves mere repetitions.

All this profitable activity was watched by the English factors at Bantam with gloomy dissatisfaction. While the Dutch were swarming in and out, they were left alone to buy if they could, to keep their storehouse—their “godown” —safe from thieves who were numerous, and fires which were frequent, as best they might. From the day when Lancaster left them at the end of 1602, till Henry Middleton came in on 21st January 1605 with four sail, no ship belonging to their Company had come to Bantam. The only English ships they saw belonged to Edward Michellborne, whom we know. He had been authorised by King James to make a voyage to China. He never went near his supposed destination, but applied himself to “making his voyage” by plunder. He seized a Chinese junk consigned to the Rajah of Bantam, who of course, and at once, proceeded to beat him—on the backs of the Company's factors.

They complained that if this sort of thing was to be repeated there would soon be an end of all chance of trade for us at Bantam. It did not go on because Michelborne threw up the game and sailed for home after losing a number of his men in taking possession of a Japanese pirate junk. Poor John Davis, "The Navigator," was one of the slain. Michelborne was a bad specimen of the Elizabethan adventurer, and concerns us only because he was the first example of a nuisance which was to be very familiar to the Company further on—to wit, the interloper.

When Middleton did come in, the joy of the factors was dashed by their discovery that his ships were reeking with disease. It was raging in his crews when he reached the latitude of Table Bay, and though he had orders not to anchor there, he was forced in because his crews were crippled by scurvy. Fresh meat cured them for a while, but as he tried to make up for loss of time by not stopping for further supplies in Madagascar, the maritime fiend was as active as ever when he dropped anchor at Bantam. Even that he could not do without the help of boats and boatmen brought to him by the factors. And here, where we have a leading example, there is a good excuse to say, once and for all, that the mortality not only in the ships but ashore was dreadful in those seas and at that time. Half the factors at Bantam died within a few months. In the ships the deaths were so numerous that one begins to wonder how any crew was left. When Middleton did leave the roadstead on his way to the Moluccas the journal of his voyage is full of such entries as "the seventeenth day died of the flux (dysentery) William Lewed, John Jenkins and Samuel Porter," "this day died Henry Stiles, our master carpenter, and James Varnam, and John Iberson all of the flux." And so it goes on.



The ships were not wholly unmanned, simply because the captain hired native sailors—Lascars, as we call them to-day. There is no greater mistake than the common assumption that the employment of Lascars is modern and a novelty. It began at the beginning and went on to the end of the Company's trade. The Dutch suffered from disease also in those tropical countries, but not nearly so severely. The difference was due to the utter recklessness of the English sailors and factors in their eating and drinking, and in particular to their abuse of arrack when they were ashore, to the consumption of huge quantities of fruit often unripe or over-ripe, and at Bantam to the bad quality of the water.

Middleton's helpless state was all the more depressing to the factors because Steven van der Hagen had already reached Java on 31st December 1604 with the Dutch Company's second fleet. He had been sent out late in 1603, so as to be in the Straits of Mozambique betimes next year. When there, he was to intercept the outward-bound Portuguese carracks, to take the town of Mozambique if he could, to assail the Portuguese all along the coast of Malabar, then to go on to the Indian Archipelago taking and garrisoning forts to the best of his power. His voyage was, in fact, to be first and foremost a military operation. The instructions which laid down the lines for his cruise were given him in a sealed envelope which was not to be opened till he was beyond the line. When the seal was broken and the orders were made known, Van der Hagen had to listen to a loud protest from his crews. There was a party in the Netherland ports which was opposed to a policy of prize-taking, partly on moral, partly on business grounds. The men were nowise reluctant to take Portuguese carracks and galleons. But they had signed on for a voyage out and home.

Now they learnt that they might expect to be left ashore to do duty as soldiers on the other side of the world, perhaps for years. The sailor of all times and nationalities has been, too often with good cause, suspicious of the wiles of crafty landsmen, and also tenacious of his rights. These Netherlanders said that they had been cheated into signing-on for more than they knew. And they would not put up with being swindled. All Steven van der Hagen's personal influence with his men, which was great, and all his resolution, which was considerable, were needed to quiet the outcry and avert a mutiny. Nor would they have been enough, if he had not made promises which the Bewindhebbers would have been reluctant to fulfil.

When the trouble was quieted for the time, the fleet went on. The Mozambique Channel was swept, though the fort was too strong for a mere landing-party, prizes were taken, and then Van der Hagen cruised for weeks outside of Goa and along the coast of Malabar. He made a treaty with the old enemy of the Portuguese, the Zamorin of Calicut, and established relations with their friend the Rajah of Cochin. Then he went to the islands. After transacting the usual business at Bantam, and sending off cargoes for home, he set out on 25th August 1605 on his chief mission, which was to drive the Portuguese from the Spice Islands.

The work was done for the time. Having no enemy at sea, Van der Hagen could afford to divide his force. He himself seized Amboyna, where the Portuguese commander, Mello, surrendered a strong fort very tamely. His weakness cost him his life, but the Dutch were in Amboyna for good. Meanwhile the Vice-Admiral, Cornelis Bastiaenzoon, had assailed the fort in the island of Tidore. It might have

resisted him, for the Portuguese commander, Alvarez d'Abreu, made a stout defence, but his powder magazine blew up, and he could but surrender the ruins of his fortress. The fall of Amboyna and of Tidore happened under the very eyes of Middleton.

At Bantam he had been able to load two of his ships and to send them off for home. He might as well have kept them with him, for when he was himself on his way to England, he found them at Penguin Island near Table Bay in great misery and wellnigh unmanned. There were in one of them, the *Hector*, only ten Englishmen and four "Chinese." They were nine months out from Bantam, and in "such lamentable distress" that they were thinking of running their ship ashore. When among the Spice Islands, Middleton was compelled to look on, while the Netherlands not only drove the Portuguese from Amboyna and Tidore, but secured treaties with the rulers of the other islands by which they were endowed with the monopoly of the trade, as the price of their "protection." He would hang on the skirts of the Dutch with his now very weakly manned ships, and pick up what cargo was to be got. The Portuguese officers who supplied the Spanish historian Argensola with facts for his history of the Moluccas, asserted that Middleton bought part of his cargo by paying Abreu, the Governor of Tidore, for it with gunpowder. The Dutch say the same thing, so at a later date did his own brother. Middleton, indeed, denied that he had dealt in contraband of war. It is, however, sadly to be feared that he did so, just because he had to. From the Moluccas he came back to Bantam, and so home. The voyage returned a profit of 95 per cent., but it was a mere case of come and go. The Dutch were planting themselves firmly. The garrison Van der

Hagen put into Amboyna did indeed give trouble, even to the extent of mutiny, but the Admiral talked most of them over, and those who would not be persuaded he put in irons. Middleton left Bantam homeward bound on 6th October 1605, and after picking up the lame ducks at Table Bay and visiting St Helena, anchored in the Downs on the 2nd May in 1606.

The years which immediately followed the return of Steven van der Hagen to the Netherlands can be passed over rapidly. One fact which dominated all through them must be noted and borne in mind. It is essential and goes far to explain the future fortunes of the rival companies. From 1606 forward the merchants of London applied themselves more and more energetically to the policy of establishing and extending their trade in the mainland of India, while the Netherland Company, without neglecting other regions, made it their first purpose to conquer the Spice Islands wholly, and to win the control of the entire Indian Archipelago. The London merchants did not renounce their hopes of winning profit among the islands, but they did not make this their main aim as the Dutch did. The result was that when, after not a little simmering conflict and a good deal of preliminary sparring, the final clash did come in 1618, it was to be fought between a part of the forces of the London Company and the bulk of those of their enemy.

Van der Hagen, when on his voyage home, met the Admiral who was to replace him, Cornelis Matelief, called "De Jonghe" the Young, at the Mauritius in January 1606, and the two discussed affairs. Matelief had sailed in May with eleven capital ships. The report as to the position in the Moluccas given him by his predecessor appears to have been too favourable. In fact, the Spanish



Governor of the Philippines, Don Pedro de Acuña, came to the help of the Portuguese whose misfortunes had been recounted to him by refugees. He brought a squadron which was superior for the time being to the Dutch ships then at hand. Don Pedro was a man of spirit. He drove the Dutch from Tidore, and set up a fort in Ternate. But the Spaniard lacked the resources needed in order to follow up a success of this kind. It was not without an occasional set-back that the Dutch won, but they never failed to return in force, and in the end the victory remained to them. As he felt sure as to the Moluccas, Matelief followed the regular round, sweeping the Mozambique Channel, and, as a Dutch historian candidly puts it, "running his head against the Portuguese fortress." The Admiral, an outspoken man, told his masters that they ordered him to make war on land and gave him no soldiers, and to trade while making war at sea. It ought to be one at a time, said Matelief. After failing to do what could not be done at Mozambique, he went on, and tried it again at Malacca. Here he could look for some help from the Rajah Bongsu of Johore. But the Malays proved useless for any other purpose than cutting off the food supply of Malacca on the land side. The town was brought to the verge of starvation. Andres Furtado de Mendoça, the Governor, was an able man, and resolute, but he could do no more than reduce rations and wait for relief from Goa. It came in August, when the Viceroy, Don Martin Affonso de Castro, turned up with fourteen galleons. He wasted time in making an unsuccessful attack on Achin, and Matelief's look-out ship at Cape Rachado could warn him in time. Matelief, who had eleven capital ships, gave battle when the Viceroy did come up. The actions were fought with more spirit than good order. Two Portuguese

and two Dutch ships got entangled, caught fire, and were burnt to the water's edge. The fleets separated without decisive result, and Matelief, who had damage to make good and was beginning to lack stores, went to Bantam.

If, now, the Viceroy had been a gentleman qualified by nature to conduct war, he might have ended the campaign with fair success. He had taught his opponents to respect his united forces. For the greater misfortune of the Portuguese, the Viceroy lacked the necessary light of nature, and would not take the good advice of Furtado de Mendoça. He detached half his force to convoy trade from the Bay of Bengal—an act which Napoleon would have defined as an *insigne bêtise*. And so Matelief judged that it was. He returned on the 22nd October with all his force now refitted, fell on the weakened fleet of the Portuguese, and made an end of it. The detached ships when pursued ran into a creek near Kedah, and dug themselves in. They escaped capture, but the Netherlanders were masters on the water.

Being now free from the risk of interruption on the sea, Matelief could promote the Company's business during 1607. He cruised along the coast of Java, then went on to Amboyna and the Moluccas, and from them to the coast of China, and back along the mainland of Asia to Bantam, which he reached on the 16th November. His successor, Paulus van Caerden, came into the roadstead with a squadron of eight ships on the 6th January 1608, and Matelief sailed for home on the 28th. He had brought out and took back on his shoulders the best head the Netherlands had so far sent out to the East. The seventeen Bewindhebbers were no more pleased than other superior authorities have ever been when a subordinate pointed out that they were not managing their business to the best purpose. In a quiet way they

resented the Admiral's honest candour. But he was a director in the Company and a man much respected. They could not muzzle him, and were themselves not obstinately perverse. In the end they accepted the three pieces of sound advice he gave them.

1. If you mean to carry on military operations on land you must send out soldiers. The crews of your ships cannot sail them, discharge and load cargoes, and at the same time supply landing-parties and garrison forts.

2. A policy of conquest and occupation implies a constant ruling authority. You must appoint a governor-general.

3. You must have a headquarters, a residence for your governor, a storehouse, and dockyard.

It is perhaps the best proof of Matelief's good judgment that the place he recommended was Jacatra, where the city of Batavia, the capital of Netherlands India, now stands.

Concerning Paulus van Caerden there is little to be said save that he was the most unlucky of all Dutch—or even of all admirals. He went to the Moluccas, and distributed his ships among the islands. When they were duly stationed, he went on a round of inspection in a tender, fell in with two Spanish cruisers, and was captured after a smart action. He was exchanged for Spaniards taken by the Dutch, and when he came back to his command he did it again. This time there were no prisoners on hand to exchange for him. The Spaniards fixed his ransom at a stiff figure. On due consideration the Dutch decided that it was an overcharge, and refused to pay so much for Paulus van Caerden. The unlucky man died a prisoner at Manila.

His successor, Pieter Willemszoon Verhoeff, was also unfortunate, though in a more tragic way. He was a distinguished naval officer who had been second in command

with Heemskerck in a great battle with the Spaniards in the Straits of Gibraltar, and had ably taken the place of his chief who was killed. His reputation as a fighting man was no doubt the reason why he was chosen for this venture by the directions of the States General. It was now clear that a truce would shortly be made with Spain, and the Company was anxious to win as strong a position as possible before military operations were likely to be suspended. It was difficult for the Bewindhebbers to make the necessary effort. Recent operations had been costly and had consumed profits. Dividends had fallen off, the stock had gone down from 140 to 46. Still, with the help of the States General, a fleet of ten sail of capital ships and of four tenders was fitted out. It carried a body of German mercenaries who could always be levied in the Rhine Provinces and the Free Towns by anyone who showed a bag of money and who beat the drum.

In spite of the scale of the preparations Verhoeff's cruise was not successful. He went to the Banda Islands, which were in arms to free themselves from Dutch control. At Banda Nera, the chief island, he tried to make a peaceful settlement by negotiating with the chiefs. They promised to meet him. With a confidence which, in a man who had any knowledge of the East, would have been imbecile, and in him was hardly pardonable, Verhoeff allowed himself to be wheedled into leaving his escort of musketeers behind when he came to the place of meeting in the bush. He was murdered, and so were the civil officials he brought with him. It was a piece of childish mischief on the part of the Bandanese. Nor could anything be more infantile than the haste they made to excuse themselves by saying that it was all a mistake, and that they would be good in future. The



other operations in the Moluccas were insignificant. The Dutch Vice-Admiral François Wittert went to Manila to cruise against the Spaniards. He planted himself at the mouth of the bay, and began to intercept Chinese junks. In that way he gathered a good deal of booty, but it did him and his countrymen no good. The Spanish Governor, Don Juan de Sylva, who had just succeeded Acuña, was another Spaniard of the old kind. He filled a couple of trading ships and a swarm of light craft with men, and sent them down to assail the two Dutch craft under command of his nephew. Wittert was boarded, his ships were taken, and he was killed with most of his crews.

By 1610 the Dutch had struck roots among the islands. They had forts in Amboyna, Ternate, Matchian, and Batchian. To the west they not only had their factory at Bantam, but their agent there, Jacques L'Hermite, had secured a footing in Jacatra, a comparatively healthy place with a useful roadstead to the east, and what was of extreme importance to them, a good market for the purchase of provisions. Their arrangement with the local rajah entitled them to no more than a storehouse, and a residence for their servants. But they knew already how easily a shed and a few cottages could be, step by step, turned into a fort strong enough to defy any native power. The London Company was running a race with them. It, too, had trading agents at Jacatra and in other places—in Sumatra, in Borneo, and among the smaller islands. In point of enterprise and skill as traders, our countrymen were at least the equals of the Dutch. John Jourdain and Nathaniel Courthope were as able as any of the Netherlands—with the exception of one who very soon after 1610 shot up to a towering predominance in the Indian Archipelago, the great Governor-General, Jan Pieterszoon

Coen. The superiority of the Dutch in the Archipelago was due to their consistent efforts and their definite policy.

The "XVII" who governed the Netherland Company were the first to see that, in the midst of the anarchy of small principalities which kept the Archipelago in a constant turmoil, in face of the steady hostility of the Spaniards and Portuguese, and in view of the utter incapacity of the natives to keep any arrangement they might make for some immediate advantage, there was no security for trade apart from the possession and exercise of armed dominion. Therefore they set themselves to conquer. The States General laid down the rule that all positions occupied by the Company must be considered as *heid*, not for the traders only, but for the Republic. The truce made with Spain in 1609 authorised the Dutch to trade with all princes and states not actually under the dominion of King Philip III. But the Portuguese held that the Pope had given them the trade, conquest, and right to rule over all the East Indies. They would not allow that any native power was truly independent, and they paid but small attention to the truce. The Netherlanders were well pleased to have an excuse to go on annexing islands. What they took they kept as their own, and as a monopoly. And this policy was bound to bring them into violent collision with the London Company.

As invariably happens when the disputants are not merely irrational, each of the parties had a case. The London Company had freely engaged itself not to try to force its trade on any port or territory actually in the possession of Spain or Portugal. King James I always directed the "generals" of the Company, in the commissions which he issued to them at the beginning of every voyage, to abstain from any kind of aggression on the possessions of Christian

princes who were in amity with him. Now, said the Dutch, on your own principles you have no claim to insist on competing in trade with us at places we have conquered in the course of our war with Spain and Portugal, or where the natives have put themselves under our protection, and have engaged to sell the produce of their countries to us only. These are our possessions just as much as Goa is of the Portuguese, or Manila of the Spaniards. And we are in amity with your King. The London Company would not allow any force to this argument. The rights of Spain and Portugal were old and recognised. The rights claimed by the Dutch were new. They had been acquired while the Netherlanders were acting side by side with us and in professed friendship. They amounted to a restriction on the freedom of the seas—imposed to our hurt. That was the substance of the dispute which was conducted by floods of diplomatic eloquence at its best, and at its worst in the Eastern seas by torrents of mutual abuse often merely muddle-headed, but not seldom absolutely blackguard.

At this distance in time, we can afford to look at it all as a “thing judged.” In my own opinion, which is stated in a modest spirit, the Dutch had the stronger case. It was true that there was no security for Europeans in the Archipelago apart from the exercise of power. The Dutch, aided by the fact that they were at war with Spain for years after England was at peace, had conquered. When they were masters they acted on the principles which were adopted then and for long afterwards by all nations—and by none more rigidly than by ourselves—which owned dependencies, namely, that a colony or dominion was to be exploited for the sole advantage of the dominant State. The essentials of the debate were forcibly put forth by Coen. “You English

wish to trade in the Spice Islands where we have established security by not a little outlay of blood and treasury. Why don't you go to Ternate where the Spaniards have placed a garrison and are building forts, drive them out, and keep it for yourselves?" "We can't," said the London Company, "because we are a trading company, and would soon bankrupt ourselves by spending money on forts and soldiers. We claim the freedom of the sea." "Pooh," said the Dutch, "what you mean is that you refuse to share the burden of making trade safe in those seas, and claim to come 'sneaking' (they were fond of that word) into our painfully acquired field, and cut down our profits by competition. You shan't." There are many such quarrels in colonial history. What distinguishes the fight in the Indian Archipelago is that it was carried on by the merchants and skippers of the two companies, not only without open support by their home governments, but often in spite of the agitated attempts of King James and of the States General to force them to keep the peace.

The first Governor-General of Netherlands India came to Bantam at the end of 1610. Pieter Both of Amersfoort had been in the East before, when he sailed for the Brabant Company. His appointment was the second important step in the foundation of the Dutch power. They had a Governor-General. What remained was to acquire a capital, or headquarters. Until they had one, the Governor must live in his ship, and his council cruised with him except when its members were detached to attend to the Company's business here and there. It was a half-measure, and like all its kind bred delays and confusions. The period of the migratory Governors-General—Pieter Both, Gerard Reinst, and Laurens Reael—lasted from December 1610 till March 1619, when the



hour brought the man, Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who was the true framer of the Dutch power in Netherlands India. It was a time of little things. But the Dutch governors and skippers went on steadily excluding English trade from all the islands where the rule of the Netherland Company could be established. In vain did the valiant Nathaniel Courthope strive to make Run in the Banda Islands a centre of English trade in spice. He was blockaded, ill-supported, and at last cut off at sea by a superior force. He fought nobly, and his native crew backed him up well. But he was overpowered, wounded; and resolute not to fall into the hands of the enemy alive or dead, he leapt overboard with his weapons, and went down like a Viking hero.

The one event which mattered in these eight years was the rise of Coen. This grim Hollander was a native of Enkhuizen, who, after a brief apprenticeship to banking at Rome, went young to the Indies. He began as koopman and opperkoopman among the Spice Islands. Here, of course, he came into contact with the English. There is a story told of him on the best authority which is so characteristic that it is worth bushels of description. Among the servants of the London Company whom he met was John Jourdain, of Lyme Regis, a far-travelled man, whose memoirs are well worth reading. They discussed the questions pending between their masters, and parted on terms of cold civility. Jourdain sought another meeting. Coen did not refuse, and he listened in silence while the Englishman went all over the ground again. Then he rose, put on his hat, and walked off, saying no word good or bad. Indeed, there never was a man to whom the mere word was less important, and the fact was more sacred than Coen.

It was to the credit of the Governor-General Reael that he

saw his subordinate's value. Coen was named Director of the factory at Bantam. It was a sink of iniquity. Living with death from the vile climate always before them, exasperated by conflict with their English rivals who were not a jot better, and under incessant threatenings from the native Regent—the Pangeran Arja Manggala—the Dutch sought a short life and a merry one. They were behaving like the crew of a wrecked ship who had broken into the spirit room. "The place is not only scandalous," said Reael, "but horrible and abominable."

Coen was the man to bring it to heel. Able, industrious, fearless, perfectly honest, and heart and soul "the servant of the Company," he could be just and merciful as he understood the words. Justice and mercy to him meant the swift infliction of terrifying punishment on evildoers. His portrait, in which he stands by his smiling and kindly wife, gives one a shudder. It has a gaunt, an almost shark-like air of menace, a terrible man to be up against. In March 1619, when Reael was allowed—rather to his disappointment—to return home for the good of his health, Coen was nominated as his successor. He was only twenty-seven years of age. Very seldom has so young a man, not born a prince, had so great an opportunity.

The London Company had bitterly resented the high-handed ways of its rival and its own losses. But it had been helpless. The King could do nothing for it, not only because he was, as always, hampered by lack of money, but because he could not afford to quarrel with the United Netherlands in the then state of European politics. An appeal to Parliament was not to be thought of, if only because it would have offended the King, and might have provoked him to recall the charter. The Directors must needs prepare

to fight, if the Company was to make good among the islands. Therefore, and with their own resources only, they began to prepare a competent force to vindicate their rights. While Coen was bringing his factory to order, was negotiating with the shifty Pangeran, and exchanging tart letters with the English factors, ships were coming out or being made ready to come, in England. In an evil hour the Company decided to put its fleet under a double command. The expedition must, of course, pay its way by trade. John Jourdain was named to go as "President," to direct the commercial side of the venture. As it was also to fight, a "General" was provided for "sea occasions." The man chosen was Sir Thomas Dale, an old Low Country officer, who had for a time been Governor in Virginia. He had a reputation as a disciplinarian, and deserved it. The misfortune was that more was required of him than the virtues of a vigilant old drill sergeant—and Dale showed that he was but little else. Nor did the Company reflect that as each of its chiefs was the final authority on his own side, they might differ as to the best use to be made of the ships, and come to an open quarrel.

The two chiefs sailed in the same ship, and were very nearly drowned in Table Bay by the upsetting of a boat. They left the Bay on the 25th July 1618, and did not reach Bantam till the 19th November. They wasted twenty days on the voyage, chasing, wrangling with, and blackmailing a Portuguese carrack. It was a stupid action, and one done out of a sordid love of booty. They gave Coen more time to prepare. When they did reach the Straits of Sunda, the largest and the most richly laden of their vessels, the *Sun*, was clumsily wrecked on the island of Enganho. Coen was not at Bantam when they sailed in. It had come to an open

quarrel between him and the Pangeran. The Dutch chief had removed the Company's treasure and most of his staff to Jacatra, where he was refitting his ships and pushing on the construction of his fort.

For a whole month the English remained at Bantam, trading. They captured a richly laden Dutch ship, the *Black Lion*, and held her as a hostage. It was a matter of course in that age that after a long voyage many of Dale's sailors were disabled by scurvy. Some correspondence took place between the two sets of authorities. Coen, who was not without a vein of malice, insisted in writing in Dutch, of which language Dale, though he had been in the Low Countries for many years, did not know a word. The trick, which was no doubt meant to exasperate, infuriated the General. He stamped on the letter, hurled his own hat into the scuppers, and stormed about the quarter-deck, shouting that Coen ought to have used a civilised language—an undignified explosion of temper and one which speaks ill for his good sense. At last he set to work too late. Coen had refitted his ships. He decided to leave the fort at Jacatra to look after itself. Pieter van der Broecke was left with a garrison, and orders to hold out as long as he could, but to surrender to the English if surrender he must, and not to the Pangeran from Bantam who had come to co-operate with Dale. The English had a superiority in numbers at sea, and Coen decided to go himself eastward, pick up all the ships then in the Spice Islands, and come back in superior force. With an ineptitude which beggars description, Dale allowed him to set off under cover of a series of "rear-guard" actions which the Dutch sea officers fought with steady nerve and good judgment.

The next phase of the episode has an element of comedy.



Dale prepared to co-operate with the Pangeran in taking the fort. It was unfinished and hardly defensible. The Dutch offered to surrender to him, and Sir Thomas was prepared to take possession. He was extremely disappointed when the Pangeran, who had no intention of helping one European intruder to replace another, and wished to keep the fort, refused positively to consent to the arrangement. He marched off with the bulk of his army, carrying away the local rajah, and leaving a brother of his own to hold Jacatra. Dale sailed off too. The Dutch garrison naturally refused to yield to the Pangeran's brother. Van der Broecke had foolishly allowed himself to be trapped into an interview with Arja Manggala, and had been, of course, treacherously seized. The garrison did without him. They had no great difficulty. Food was abundant, and there was a store of strong Spanish wine, an article of trade with the natives. The tedium of the siege was further relieved by the company of dancing girls from Malacca, half-bred Portuguese and Malays. They were attractive, and of the easiest possible virtue.

While the Dutch garrison was making an heroic defence on these pleasant terms, the English forces had fallen to pieces. Dale and Jourdain quarrelled. The President insisted on scattering the ships for trade. Most of the captains followed him. Dale was left with a remnant. He was suffering from dysentery, and had now begun to understand what Coen was about when he sailed to the East. Foreseeing that an overwhelming force would be on him soon after the north-eastern monsoon set in, he waited only till it began to blow, and then sailed for the coast of Coromandel where he died.

Now tragedy trod close on the heels of comedy. Coen

returned with concentrated sea forces and a thousand soldiers he drew from the island garrisons. He had decided to seize Jacatra and make a Dutch capital of it. At the head of his thousand men, rapier in hand, he swept the Bantamese into the jungle, and the whole native population with them. Then he burnt the town to the ground, and laid the foundations of Batavia. It was to be the capital of a Dutch dominion. Coen annexed the country westward as far as the borders of Bantam, eastward to Cheribon, and southward to the sea. Then he turned to the congenial task of making an end of the English shipping. Nothing now hampered him. After concentrating to win, he could safely divide to pursue. Dale was gone with the ships which adhered to him. Even the *Black Lion*, the prize which was to have been used as a hostage, had been lost. Her prize crew had broken into the spirit room in search of drink, and one of them had dropped a lighted candle into a barrel of arrack. The fiery liquor blazed up. The rascally prize crew ran off, and the *Black Lion* was burnt to the water's edge. Dale could, and did, hang the ringleader in this piece of disorder—but the prize was gone. The Dutch Governor, who was as whole-heartedly for "thorough" as our Strafford, did not waste an hour before hunting down all the London Company's craft still in the islands.

Jourdain had gone to Patani in the Gulf of Siam with two ships. If the English on the spot at the time were right, he was regarded with particular malignity by the Dutch. Coen certainly looked on him as especially dangerous. "He is," so the General had written, "a very clever fellow and very pushful. The safest course to take with such as he is shut the front door in their faces." On this occasion care was taken to make sure that the door would be banged.

Coen sent three big craft to follow our two to Patani, and he entrusted the command to Janszoon, the captain of the *Black Lion*, who had lost severely by the capture of his ship. He would be particularly zealous. The calculation was sound, but the complete success of the Governor-General's plan was due less to the Dutch skipper than to Jourdain. He was at anchor in the roadstead when the Dutch ships were seen in the offing standing in. The English sailing-master and other officers implored him to get under way and fight under sail, for fight they saw they must, and they were perfectly ready. But Jourdain was of the bulldog breed—a very good breed, but subject to one weakness. It is quite as capable of hanging on to the wrong thing with indomitable tenacity as to the right—and this English bulldog hung on to the wrong thing. Nobody, he swore, should ever be able to say that he had left his anchorage at the bidding of any Dutchman. There he would stay, maugre the beards of all the “frogs of the Batavian Marsh.”

Janszoon, who manifestly knew his business, made the book moves. He told off one ship to deal with the small Englishman, and the other two he anchored, one on the bow and the other on the quarter of Jourdain's vessel. Her crew, though they knew they were being sacrificed, fought stoutly. Many of them were Malays who had been shipped to replace English sailors lost by scurvy and dysentery. But these dark foreigners stuck to their guns finely. What could they do? As Jourdain allowed himself to be engaged, the heavy guns in the waist could not be brought to bear on the enemy who had the full use of his broadsides. The English and Malay crew went down in swathes, the ship was cut to pieces. At last, blows did what no reasoning could have done. Jourdain saw that he must surrender. He came

to the mainmast and, standing on the booms, he hailed Janszoon's ship. While he was speaking, he was shot to the heart, and fell dead. The angry English witnesses who tell the story assert that he was treasonably shot from Janszoon's ship. The Dutch captain repudiated the charge hotly, and indeed, as the bow guns were still firing at the Dutch ship opposite them, and she was replying, the probability is that the shot came from that side. The survivors, who reported copiously, knew very well that Jourdain had brought disaster on them all by arrogant stupidity—but he was a brave fellow, said they, and death pays all debts, and what else is there to say?

While Jourdain was meeting his death at Patani, other English vessels—among them the famous old *Dragon* which had carried Lancaster's flag—were going on the road to ruin at Tecoe in Sumatra. The consorts of the *Dragon* were small, the whole body was commanded by Robert Bonnar, a well-known servant of the Company. The story is all but a repetition of the tragedy at Patani. Bonnar decided finally to fight at anchor when the Dutch squadron of six sail stood into the roadstead. The skipper of one of the small vessels refused to fight, apparently on religious grounds. But his men and those of the other little craft took their boats, and came to reinforce the crew of the *Dragon*. In this case too a gallant resistance was made. Bonnar was mortally wounded by a shot which broke his spine, and died ashore. When, as was inevitable, the *Dragon* was surrendered, the crew, according to the Dutch, set her on fire. They were driven back by a threat that they would be shot if they refused to put the fire out. Each side, as we see, loved to tell stories to the discredit of the other. The fate of the famous old *Dragon* was less honourable



than to perish by fire. With a sour humour, which one is tempted to attribute to Coen, the Netherlanders used her as a transport to carry materials for the great fort they were raising at Batavia. She was so worn out at this work that the London Company refused to take her back when she was offered.

With the retreat of Dale, the foundation of Batavia, the deaths of Jourdain and Bonnar, and the expulsion of the English flag from the Archipelago, the fight for the islands was over. Other events there were to be, and efforts to undo the done, but nothing for many generations shook the hold which the policy of the Bewindhebbers had fixed on the whole vast region—with the help of the governing power and the energy of Jan Pieterszoon Coen.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE INFANCY OF JOHN COMPANY

THE failure of the London Company in the Indian Archipelago has been cleared out of the way. Now we can turn to a region where it did not fail, but began a triumphant work indeed. It knew not what it was doing, and could not in the least foresee what was, a century and a half afterwards, to be the outcome of its labours. The Governor and Committees succeeded wherein they seemed to fail. They aimed at securing at least a good share in the trade of the Spice Islands, and were heavily beaten by their enemies, the Netherlands. They applied themselves to the west coast of India as an alternative, a subordinate undertaking, meant only to help to the attainment of their aim in the Moluccas, and, as it were, incidentally in the course of the day's work, they laid the foundation of the British Empire in India. If Clive was able to win the Battle of Plassey and take hold of Bengal; if Warren Hastings and his successors could dominate all India, they owed their opportunity to the generals, captains, and factors of the old London Company, and what they did between 1607 and the taking of Ormuz in 1623, along the shores of Africa and Western India, in the Gulfs of Cambaya and of Persia, and in the Red Sea.

Enough has been said of the first and second voyages promoted by the Company. Both went to the islands—

Lancaster first, then Henry Middleton. When the second named came back in 1607, he brought news of strong Dutch opposition in the islands. He also was able to confirm a piece of knowledge which cannot have been new to the Company. They had the example of the Portuguese to guide them. The factors too were using their eyes and reporting their observations home. Profits were to be made, and the general trade of merchandise could be notably helped by taking an active share in the port-to-port commerce of the Eastern seas. Not only by carrying goods and bullion to some landfall in Asia or Africa, and with them buying a cargo for sale at home, but by going to Guzerat, the Red Sea, or Persia, purchasing a cargo and carrying it to Sumatra, Java, Siam, or further away to China, were gains to be made. With what was brought from ports in the Middle East to others in the Far East, cargoes could be secured in China, Siam, and the islands, for Europe. This was largely the regular round or, as the Spaniards would have said, the career of the Indies for the Company.

At some periods it was saved from distress or even ruin by the activity of its servants far away in the East in this local trade. In later days the Company, consciously or unconsciously, following the example set by Coen in Java, allowed "free merchants" and "free mariners" to work on their own account within the limits of its charter, *i.e.* from the Cape eastward to America. These somewhat romantic-looking names meant no more than English traders and sailors who paid for a licence to work for themselves in that vast region. They were forbidden to share in the home trade. When the navigation laws, passed after 1640, imposed on all English ships the obligation to employ the King's natural-born subjects to the extent of three-fourths

in their crews, the "country ships" so-called, engaged in running from port to port in the East, were not thus restricted. So they were commanded by Englishmen, but manned by Lascars. English free mariners took service with native ship-owners, who, so Captain Alexander Hamilton could affirm, valued them not only because they were good seamen, but because they were honest; and, just to be done with a truth which ought not to be ignored, he added that Lascars were largely shipped by the Company itself for the home trade. Even the navigation laws allowed a captain who was short-handed to take men where he could find them. The climate of the East was deadly, and the loss by death great. Desertion was never rare, and became common when our sailors took to entering the service of the native princes as gunners. It may safely be affirmed that none of the Company's captains sailed for home without a high proportion of Lascars in his crew. We calculated that three or four were required to replace a European sailor. So the number of these Asiatics in Indiamen was inevitably large. It is difficult to say what the proportion was. But we are not quite without the means of making an estimate. The Lascars brought to London were lodged in boarding-houses supervised by the Company, which was bound to send them back, and were kept under control by their own "serangs" or boatswains. In 1814 the murder of a Lascar by a serang led to an inquiry. It was found that there were two thousand of them in the Company's boarding-houses. As the number of Indiamen which entered or cleared in any year was about fifty-five on an average, it is obvious that they must have carried from forty to fifty Lascars, taking one with another—more in the bigger ships, less in the smaller. Suppose a large Indiaman sailed from home with sixty men and lost say a third of



them by death or desertion—no extraordinary number—the twenty must be replaced by sixty or eighty Lascars. When she reached the Thames she would—if none of them died on the voyage—have forty of the King's natural-born subjects and half as many again or more Lascars. Moreover, these natives of the East might be carried in lieu of the fourth of the crew who were not bound to be “natural-born subjects,” and they would be entered at the rate of three to one Englishman. A crew of sixty in an outward-bound ship could be made up of forty-five “natural-born subjects” and forty-five or even sixty Asiatics. In the end the rule was made, and as far as was possible followed, that an Indiaman must carry four Englishmen to the hundred tons register, and as many Lascars as were thought necessary. To give a detailed account of this trade would be a task for an antiquary. A less well-qualified authority is warned off by the words of Sir Henry Yule, written *sub voce* “Bafta” in that treasure-house of good reading and scholarship named *Hobson Jobson*: “Nothing is harder than to find intelligible explanations of the distinctions between the numerous varieties of cotton-stuffs formerly exported from India to Europe under a still greater variety of names; names and trade being generally alike obsolete.” The general character of the trade for us, and for the Dutch alike, is easily stated. We began by buying native manufactures in Guzerat on the west, and the Coromandel coast on the east of India—some for export to Europe, some to be carried to the Archipelago. After a brief interval English and Dutch alike, but for a good while the second more vigorously than the first, began to direct and to influence the processes and the patterns of native weavers. European influence on Indian products started with the first firm establishment of the factories of the two

great companies. Dyes, particularly indigo, were bought in Guzerat, and opium in Malwa, for export to Europe, to Persia, to the islands. "Affion, which we call opium," so said a Dutch supercargo who sailed with Steven van der Hagen, and whose name is thought to have been Stalpaert van die Wiele, "can be bought at a profitable (*i.e.* low) price here" (in Guzerat to wit); and he goes on to explain that it could be sold in the Moluccas for many times its weight in spice, which could then be exported to Europe with every prospect of a large gain. The opium trade was no invention of ours, nor of modern times. In a few years after Stalpaert was making his report, spice had sunk to a very minor importance in the trade of the East and with Europe. The Dutch Company soon discovered that the Spice Islands could produce more than the whole world could buy. It destroyed a part of the trees, not only to raise the price, but to avoid the loss which would follow from excessive production. When Bantam was conquered at the end of the seventeenth century, the Dutch suppressed the cultivation of pepper, and replaced it by sugar. At a later period they introduced coffee. Europe has given the East as much as ever it took away.

It was, then, for the purpose of spreading their activities beyond the islands that the Company sent out its "Third Voyage" in 1607. The small fleet was composed of three ships—the *Dragon*, the *Hector*, and the pinnace *Consent*. William Keeling was named as General, and William Hawkins, with whom went David Middleton, the brother of Henry, was captain of the *Hector*. A similarity of name has persuaded many to assume that this William Hawkins was a nephew of the more famous Sir John of Elizabethan fame. But this is not proved, nor even probable. The fact that

he was captain of the *Hector* has caused him to be described as a rough merchant skipper. But we know that a "captain" was not usually a man bred to the sea. As Hawkins spoke Turki, he had, we may be sure, served the Levant Company as a factor in Syria.

The voyage began on 12th March 1607 (N.S.). Keeling's orders were to go by Socotra to Aden, and thence to the Gulf of Cambaya, where he was to "endeavour to find a good safe harbour for maintenance of trade from Cambay to Bantam." It was the first effort to secure a footing on the mainland of India. These orders could not as yet be carried out, but a beginning was made after a fashion. The *Dragon* and the *Hector* parted in Socotra. Keeling took the first direct from that island to Bantam. Hawkins went to Surat in the Gulf of Cambaya. The town, which was to become in time the Company's chief port in the East till it was ousted by Bombay, lies eight miles up the Tapti. That river is shut to all but very small craft by a bar at the mouth, and its shallows and rapids inside. The *Hector*, therefore, must lie outside and communicate with Surat by boats and lighters. To-day the still considerable trade of the place is carried on at an anchorage south of the river. This is a very modern growth, and when Hawkins cast anchor outside the bar, he did not know of an anchorage, so far used by fishing craft only, to the north, our first and therefore our most vital conquest in India, the once busy and now solitary Swalley or Swally or Suwahli Hole.

Trade by boat and lighter would have been slow and toilsome, but it was possible. We would have borne the obstructions put in our way by nature, and have overcome them by effort and management, if they had been all. The prize was worth toiling for. Surat was the chief, if not

practically the only, outlet to the west for the trade, whether in pilgrims to Mecca or goods to the Red Sea, or in the manufactures of Guzerat to the islands. It was the window of the dominions of the Great Mogul in Hindustan. Its merchants were busy and intelligent. They showed an openness of mind, and an adaptability rare among Asiatics, for they took later to imitating the build of European vessels in their own vessels. The teak craft of Surat were respectable and often large. As things were for the six or seven years after 1607, there was an obstacle in our way, which was natural only because it was natural with the Portuguese to play the part of dog in the manger.

They did not own Surat nor pretend to. It belonged to the Great Mogul as part of the Viceroyalty of Guzerat. He was far too strong a potentate to be defied on land; but he had no naval force, and his power was limited by low-water mark. The Portuguese, as we know, held that they alone had a right to the trade and conquest of India. If they could not seize Surat because the Mogul's Rajputs and other warriors were too many for them, they could bring their frigates, handy light craft, over the bar, and stop all traffic up or down the Tapti. It was the most "natural" course possible for them to prevent the *Hector* from trading with Surat—and they did, for they attacked and stopped her boats. Even if the Company's servants had felt at liberty to tackle them sword in hand, the *Hector* could not be carried across the bar. The only course open to them at the moment was to make a direct appeal to the Great Mogul himself for permits to trade, which would give them, at any rate, a *locus standi*. So Hawkins, who had the authority of his masters at home so to do, went to the court of the Great Mogul, who was then Jehanghir, son of Akbar, and Lord of the World in official



style and his own conceit. It was our first contact with "the Moguls," which went through so many phases, and ended so grimly in the Mutiny. Now the theatre was chosen and the scene set. The actors were the Company's servants, who came in peace to offer profitable commerce to the Mogul's subjects, and claimed a friendly reception; the Portuguese, intent on barring the road; and behind the two, the Lord of the World and his governors, princes, and warriors, formidable on land, but on the water naught.

It would be amusing enough to follow the adventures of Hawkins at the court of Jehanghir. He did not make a success of it—partly by the fault of his masters, partly by his own. The Company did not so far realise, though it soon learnt, the truth that a great Asiatic potentate, descendant of a race of pastoral warriors, could not be expected to treat with a body of traders and their agent, except on the assumption that they were most inferior persons. Jehanghir, who was by no means a bad man though a barbarian, treated Hawkins fairly well, listened to the story he told in Turki, and even went so far as to provide him with a wife. Hawkins took her with thanks when he was assured that she was a Christian Armenian and a lady. But Jehanghir was no more able than other rulers to be sure that his orders were obeyed by his servants when they were out of his sight. As for his visers, his sons, and his nobles, they had simply no notion that they could be under a social obligation to tell the truth or abstain from extortion when dealing with a man of his inferior rank. Jehanghir's son, Sultan Kurrum, the future Shah Jehan, was perfectly insolent to him, and he himself was out of place. His own words and what is told of him show that he was not, as, after all, these Mogul grandees were in their barbarous fashion, a gentleman, and as he

traded and gave goods on credit, he was also a persistent dun and a bore. In the end Jehanghir grew tired of him. His final misfortune sends a beam of light into the court of Jehanghir. The Great Mogul, who was drunk most nights of his life, had a belief that there ought to be limits. So he gave orders that nobody was to drink spirits before coming to Durbar in the morning. He must not be at his cups before the sun was over the foreyard. Now, Hawkins did present himself in such a state that the odour of spirits was perceptible about him. According to him, some malicious person poured arrack over his clothes as he was going in, and he was rebuked. So he came away, and, after giving up a rash scheme to return to Europe by Goa in a Portuguese carrack, he returned to Surat in 1612. He died on his way home.

This experience had its share in inducing the Company to persuade King James to send out "a Lord Ambassador"—they undertaking to pay all expenses. Roe's embassy (1614-18) is a most interesting episode in the history of our doings in India. He was an Englishman of the finest type of his own, or any, age. Being a thorough gentleman, and representative of a king, he was qualified to win more respect than was given to Hawkins. He did nobly, and even made a conquest of Jehanghir. He and his undistinguished predecessor, helped by factors of the Company, did win permits, authorisations, "firmans," or what we took to be such. But whatever their real quality may have been, these documents were just words on paper or parchment so long as the Portuguese frigates barred the way to Surat, and the Mogul's officers had not so much as a cockboat with which to enforce respect. Therefore, for about twenty years, the one thing which mattered on the west coast of India

was the fighting of the Company's servants as they beat down the pretensions of the Portuguese. As for their relations with the Moguls and other native rulers, they may be disposed of in a few words. Since it was impossible for the Merchants of London to chastise powerful native princes with the sword (and would not have been possible for England herself at that time), there was but one other course open to them. It was to accept, quite frankly, the position of inferior persons who must petition and obey. They must apply in the right quarters for permits to trade, pay fees and taxes, and make presents to influential persons. They had to do this last piece of management at home. In a crisis of great difficulty the Governor and his council came to the wise decision that it would be an unthrifty saving to spare the presents they had hitherto offered to the Lords of the court at the New Year. They voted £1000 for the purpose. What they did at home they could equally well do at Ajmeer, at the feast of the Now Roz, the vernal equinox. As our New Year began on 25th March, and as the Now Roz is held when "the sun in his splendour enters into Aries," *i.e.* in March, the festivals were held simultaneously, or very nearly,

Presents hold a prominent place in the correspondence of the Company's servants in the East. We hear how important it is to send out with the next fleet mastiffs and greyhounds, swords and hangers, inlaid fowling-pieces, wine and distilled waters, together (a detail not to be overlooked) with portraits of Court ladies for the Mogul and his courtiers. As the factors soon learnt that the Zenana cannot safely be neglected in the Orient, they early began to include lapdogs, Venetian mirrors, fans, perfumes, and rouge. When thus lubricated, and also vigorously pushed in the market, the

Company's trade could, and did, grow apace, as soon as the Portuguese watcher on the threshold was pushed aside.

There were three stages in that conflict. The encounters in the Gulf of Cambaya, in which the blockade by Portugal was completely broken, filled the first. Then there followed an interval of retaliatory attack on the carracks and flotillas coming to or from Goa. The capture of Ormuz in alliance with Shah Abbas of Persia supplied the final catastrophe.

On the 4th April 1610 Sir Henry Middleton sailed with three ships on the same mission as Keeling and Hawkins. His "Admiral" as they said then—his flagship in modern phrase—was the largest vessel so far launched for trade in England. She was hopefully named the *Trade's Increase*, was built in the yard maintained by the Company at Deptford, but given up a few years later as being too costly. The launch was a great occasion, and was witnessed by the King and Henry, Prince of Wales, whose premature death in 1612 has left him a pathetic figure in our history. The consorts were the *Peppercorn*, commanded by Nicholas Downton. He had sailed for the Earl of Cumberland in Elizabeth's days, and was a man of marked character who wrote copiously in a queer laboured style, copied to all seeming from the euphuism of Lyly. The third of the fleet was the *Darling*, commanded by Benjamin Green. A rigid selection must be made among the many incidents of the voyage. It was not very fortunate. After the usual stop at Table Bay for fresh provisions, Middleton went on. He reached Socotra on 22nd October. The southerly monsoon was over, and he could not reach Cambaya against the strong wind of the north-easterly monsoon. So he bore up for the Red Sea. He was not out of the Sea till 4th September of the following year, and had not groped his way through reefs and along



coasts so far ill-known to English seamen till he anchored to the south of Surat on the 26th. Here he spent the 138 days during which was planted the grain of mustard seed which was to grow into the British Empire in India.

Middleton had hoped to find an English factory at Surat. There were English factors scattered about in the Mogul's dominions, prospecting, buying, feeling the way, and waiting for ships from England to help them. Only one of them was actually at Surat—Nicholas Bangham, once a joiner's apprentice, now a writer, *i.e.* clerk of the Company—a quick-witted and alert young man with, one sees, a remarkable turn for picking up languages. Sir Thomas Roe thought highly of him. But Bangham could give the General nothing but letters from Hawkins at Agra. The great thing was that Francisco de Soto, Capitaô Môr of Daman and Chaul, Portuguese ports, was there with the Capitaô Môr of Diu, a fleet of frigates and a detachment of soldiers, and they were blocking the Tapti. The Mogul's officials were looking on, helpless as usual when work was to be done on the water. It was also a thing that mattered that there now was Sir Henry Middleton determined to break down the barrier.

How was it to be done? Dom Francisco de Soto was not to be moved by argument. He turned out the whole box of essences in the way of politeness, but on the substantial point he was not to be moved. As a *fidalgo* of honour, and loyal vassal of his King, besides being an officer acting on the orders of the Viceroy at Goa, he could not allow the English to reach Surat. We rather liked Dom Francisco, who was playing what, for him, was the obligatory game in a not unmanly way. But he was exasperating when he seized some boats sent down the river by Bangham with

provisions for Middleton, and jeeringly thanked us for the supply. The fingers of Middleton were itching to be at him. The seizure of the food did amount to such an attack as, according to the directions of King James, would justify retaliation. But could the General, his captains and sailors retaliate when their ships could not be taken across the bar, and the Portuguese frigates would not come out to risk a most unequal fight with the broadsides of the *Trade's Increase*, the *Peppercorn*, and the *Darling*? Dom Francisco just sat tight and blocked the road.

Necessity and native sense persuaded Middleton that he must find a way round. There was one to the north, at a convenient distance for trade from Surat—Swalley Hole. It is a nick in the coast with a long sandbank in front and a good depth of water between the two. So far Middleton knew nothing of it. But by now the scattered factors, having learnt that he was on the coast, were flocking down to Surat. With them were survivors of the wreck of the *Ascension* in the Gulf of Cambaya not long before. Among them was the stout-hearted John Jourdain who, as we have seen, fell under a Dutch bullet at Patani a few years later. These men learnt from local traders, or officials with whom they had relations, of the existence of this handy anchorage. They told Middleton, who at once sent officers in the *Darling* to explore and sound. One of them, Pemberton, in whom he had great confidence, found the place, and marked a safe course for the big ships. During this preliminary stage Portuguese frigates crept along beside the *Darling*, keeping in shallow water where they were out of range of shot. Seeing or thinking they saw a chance to stop the English, they made a dash at the boat which was sounding ahead of the *Darling*, and they were so rash as to open fire. This was precisely

the justification we wanted for hitting back—and we did. A Portuguese frigate was taken. Middleton now resolved to move into the Hole. After standing out to sea in the hope that Dom Francisco would be deceived into thinking that he was going off and would himself retire down the coast, and finding that the *Capitaô Môr* was pushing for the desired anchorage, he stood in, anchored in eight fathoms, where his guns commanded the landing-place.

Then and there did the English take seisin of the land of India. They did not occupy the beach or try to build a fort; but they had shown that the Portuguese could not prevent them from reaching a convenient port for the maintenance of trade—at any rate, not with mere frigates. The value of Swalley Hole is demonstrated by a single fact. For long afterwards, when Portugal had lost all power to obstruct, it was frequented not only by us, but by the Dutch and French. All three had their offices and storehouses on the beach. The short portage from Swalley to Surat was more easily worked than the shallow Tapti with its sands and rapids. More—and particularly more fighting—had to be done before we enjoyed the undisturbed use of Middleton's conquest. But a good beginning had been made. We had found the port we were looking for. Then—a most important fact—we had to some extent shown the Moguls that we were strong enough to tackle the old-established Portuguese bully. Mucharrab Khan, the then Governor of Surat, saw that at least we were worthy of his attention. He allowed of some trade, and met Middleton. He also behaved with erratic insolence and greed, more in the manner of a malicious child than a grown man. When Middleton did at last sail, our position in Surat was still unstable. Whether it was to grow into something better

depended wholly on our success against the Portuguese. Till they had clear proof that we were capable of protecting them from punishment at the hands of the Viceroy of Goa, the Moguls and the trading community in Surat would not commit themselves too far. They would be rejoiced to see their tyrants well trounced, and would gladly be our friends when they knew us to be the stronger, but not till then. So the overthrow of the Portuguese was the great point which carried the small ones with it. To that we will attend exclusively for the present.

The needful demonstration that the English Company was the new strong man armed, who could, and would, possess the house, was effectually given in 1612-15. It was known to Middleton before he sailed that other ships were on the way out. The southerly monsoon of 1612 brought Captain Thomas Best with two ships, the *Dragon* and the *Hosiander*, to take up the work where Middleton had left it. He anchored at Swalley, and attended to trade till he was interrupted. If there had been foresight and vigour at Goa he would have been forced to fight his way in. The Viceroy, Dom Lourenço de Tavora, was compelled by his official obligations, and outcries at Goa, to do something, and he did the right thing, though late. Middleton had shown that mere frigates lying inside the bar of the Tapti were utterly unable to prevent English ships from reaching Swalley, so it was necessary to employ heavier craft. Tavora equipped four galleons and a swarm of light vessels. From the fact that his galleons—broadside ships, but smaller than the big trading carracks—could get into shallow waters where the *Dragon* could not come close to them, they would seem to have been less in bulk than she was, though larger than her consort, the *Hosiander*. Still,



as they were four against two, they ought, if their gunnery had been good and their crews of respectable quality, to have been able to deal with Best's two. But they were ill-manned, and their gunnery was therefore wretched. All Europeans who have navigated the seas of the tropics have been accustomed to employ native gangs to do work which is injurious to white men in the great heats. But the Portuguese were so fond of throwing all heavy labour on coloured men that they employed them to an inordinate extent. They filled their ships with negroes, kidnapped or bought slaves, or with half-breeds from Goa. The Portuguese from home, "from the Kingdom," formed a small directing element. The negro can be taught to be useful in a battery. There is plenty of fight in him when he is properly trained. The British navy has never scrupled to use the service of the black even as captain of a gun. But the Portuguese made a mere sea labourer of him. The bad quality of their opponents was perfectly well known to the English seamen.

When the Portuguese armament was seen coming on in the last days of November, Best stood on no ceremony at all with his assailants. He steered out, and engaged them at once with the *Dragon* only, as the *Hosiander* was accidentally prevented from helping him at first. The action was of a somewhat confused character among the shallows and banks. The essential fact is quite plain. It is that the galleons could not stand the fire of the *Dragon*. On their own showing, they lost a hundred and fifty men, whereas our total loss was three killed. They did not display a lack of spirit, nor even of sense. When some of their galleons got into difficulties on the sands, the light craft helped them smartly and in good time. And they did not attempt to do

what was beyond their power, close on the *Dragon* and try boarding. They evaded and fought in a rear-guard action manner. The encounter lasted beyond the first day and was of the nature of scrapping. They all straggled over to the west of Kathiawar, *i.e.* the north and west of the Gulf of Cambaya. There the Portuguese gave it up, and went off into the shallows of the coast which they knew, and so to Goa. Their retreat was witnessed by a Mogul encampment in Kathiawar, which rejoiced greatly at their overthrow, and complimented the English commander profusely.

This was the contribution of Thomas Best to the founding of the British Empire in India. It was an honourable one, and vitally important. It was precisely his repulse of Tavora which convinced the Moguls of our capacity to protect them, and broke the prestige of Portugal. The man himself was less admirable than his feat. A certain religiosity is audible in his words and, as is often the case, it went with a captious disposition and a tendency to bully. The factors complained of him and suspected him of meaning to kidnap them and carry them off to Bantam, for he did not believe in the value of the settlement at Surat. They had obtained a permit to settle and trade, and would not be carried off. They would not trust themselves in his ship, and withstood him to his face. He went off to Bantam and did more good work before sailing for home by opening trade with Siam. This was the end of his useful labours. At home he showed himself contentious and exacting with the Company. In the end he was dismissed from their service. Yet, in November 1612, he did play "the servant of the Lord with the bible and the sword" most manfully, and at the vital spot too.

And now the factors were left to settle well in at Surat, and prepare for the next fleet from England. They had

their difficulties far away there, thousands of miles from all aid, but they had their sense and their spirit, and their firm confidence that if the ships came, or when they came, a final end would be put to Portuguese dictation. The Moguls were ready to be friendly after their fashion. But there was a condition. "Exert yourselves," they said, "hit the Portuguese hard, show that you can stand on your own legs, between us and them, then we will be whole-heartedly with you." "When the fleet comes," said the factors, "you shall see." Each wished the other to begin, and that was not a state of mind altogether favourable to hearty co-operation, as was shown in October 1614 when the next fleet did come out.

Nicholas Downton had been chosen to command the four ships of which it was composed. He found the Moguls in open quarrel with the Portuguese. They were attacking Daman and Diu from the land side and could do no more. Of course the governor at Surat was eager to assail the besieged towns from the sea and, with a natural instinct not less rooted in Asiatics than in Europeans, he thought that, if he was asked for favours, a proper sense of gratitude ought to be shown. "You want to trade profitably here. Well, I am fighting those Portuguese who mean to keep you out if they can. Help me. It is your quarrel as well as mine." That was the attitude of the governor, a not wholly unreasonable one. After all, the Portuguese were resisting him because they wished to coerce him to exclude the English. Downton could not look at the question quite so simply. There were the standing orders of the King, who was doing his utmost to keep the peace with Spain, not to attack. The Company's general could not be expected to provoke the royal anger against himself and his employers.

He refused, as he was bound to refuse, to become a principal in the war even for a consideration. The governor retorted by forbidding all trade for goods or provisions. There seemed to be a deadlock, but a solution was provided by the Portuguese.

Lourenço de Tavora had disappeared under a cloud, and his successor at Goa was Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo. The new ruler was bound to try to make good Tavora's failure. He fitted out a fleet of six galleons and a great swarm of light craft. Some of these he sent in advance, and by 15th January 1615 he had concentrated his whole force on Swalley. It is said to have carried 234 guns, 2600 Portuguese from the kingdom, and 6000 natives to do the pulling and hauling. Considering the urgency of the service, one cannot but think that the Viceroy might have taken care to be at Swalley in October before Downton reached the place. Then he could have dug himself in among the sands and shallows, leaving the risk of the attack to the English. But a bad administration, such as the Portuguese was, is commonly both slovenly and tardy. Downton had but 80 guns in his four ships, and 400 men. The odds looked long, but the conditions were rather in favour of the English. They were anchored at Swalley Hole between the shore of the mainland and the long bank of sand which runs parallel to it. Light craft could cross at high tide, but not the galleons. If they were to assail the English ships they must come into the fairway from the southern end. There was a serious risk that if they came in side by side, in line abreast, some at the ends would ground. The alternative was to come in, one ship behind the other, in line ahead. If that course had been taken, the leading ships would have been in some danger of being shattered by the English fire.



It was not a very serious peril. If Azevedo had been a fidalgo of the stamp of Affonso d'Albuquerque, he would have led his line in himself and would, if necessary, have sacrificed his flagship to clear the way for the others. If he had been gallantly followed, the four English ships pinned up against the land could have been boarded, and 2600 men could surely have overpowered 400. The price paid for victory would no doubt have been high, but if the eggs had been broken at least the omelette would have been made. Azevedo, who came late, potted when he was there.

From 15th January 1615 till 13th February the Viceroy hung about the fringes of the sands and the entry to the roadstead making dabs with light craft and fireships—all to no purpose. Sir Thomas Roe was of opinion that Downton would have done better to follow Best's example—sail out and charge home. "The offensive," said the Lord Ambassador, "is more honourable and more effectual than the defensive"—a doctrine the best authorities on the art of war by sea or land in our days will heartily approve. Perhaps, but the odds were long, Azevedo's force was far stronger than Tavora's. There was the trade to be pushed, and the ships must be left fit for future use. Downton's temperament, too, was that of a resolute, foreseeing, and careful man rather than a daring one. He planted one of his ships, the *Hope*, near the entry to the roadstead as a bait to draw the Portuguese into the sands and shallows where he could deal with them in detail. They attacked her with frigates, and tried to board. She kept her decks free. But, in a way not made quite clear, she caught fire, and the flames spread to the frigates. When the other vessels came to her assistance she had freed herself. After this there is only a story of firing across spits of land, and so forth, till the Viceroy went

off repulsed. If he had taken the manlier course, his losses could not well have been greater than they were—600 to 700—and he might, he even probably would, have overpowered Downton's four ships.

The retreat of the Viceroy was the end of the Portuguese attempts to close Surat to the English. The Moguls could now begin to respect the prowess of the Company's servants, and the ban on them was raised. Downton could sail with a clear conscience. After an exchange of civilities, and of swords, with the governor, he went on to Bantam and died there on 6th August 1615. His only son had died during the operations at Swalley—"and," said the father, "the cannon we were firing at the Portuguese sounded his knell."

Now came the second phase of the struggle—that in which we turned one of the methods of the King of Portugal's servants against themselves. They had been in the habit of compelling native traders to buy a licence to make their voyages. It was for the purpose of levying this blackmail from Surat vessels about to leave for the Red Sea, or for the islands, that the *Capitão Môr Soto* was posted at the bar of the Tapti. Since they had chosen to assail us, they should be subjected to the same demand themselves. So whenever the Company's captains met a carrack or galleon, they stopped her and demanded a ransom before letting her pass. They were stretching King James's permission to defend themselves very far, but in these years they had plainly persuaded themselves that if they had little to gain from their sovereign, they had less to fear. Instances of such insults and extortions (both well deserved) were numerous. How far the spirit of the would-be masters of India had sunk is shown by their almost universal submission to a degrading imposition. There was, however, one shining exception

to this craven weakness, and, as it is the most honourable of a long series of incidents, it may be taken to represent the whole.

In February 1616 (1615 in the old calendar whose year began on Lady Day) Benjamin Joseph left home with six ships for India—the *Charles*, the *James*, the *Unicorn*, large, and the small *Globe*, *Swan*, and *Rose*. The General had been through much service in the Mediterranean, including fights with Barbary pirates. We can see enough of him to know that he had the power of inspiring affection and was earnestly pious in a puritanical way. In June, after a trying voyage down the coast of Africa and in the doldrums, he reached Table Bay, where he found a Dutch ship with a Portuguese prize. On the 6th August in the Mozambique Channel, as they neared the Comoro Islands, they sighted right ahead of them the masts of a ship which itself was hull down. The flag of Portugal was flying from the main. One course only appeared proper to the English. They crowded sail in pursuit. The quicker went ahead, while the dull sailors fell behind. First was the *Globe*, and behind, the *Charles*, the flagship. The *Globe* overtook the carrack, and hailed her with the question where she came from. The answer was "from the sea." When the *Globe* persisted, she was ordered off and then fired into. Shots struck her, and several men were maimed. This time the English had caught a tartar.

Dom Manuel de Meneses, the superior authority in the carrack, was an old soldier, and a survivor of a better day. Moreover, he was a fidalgo who, come what might, would keep his honour. When the *James* and *Charles* came up cleared for action, the General began also to inquire and to negotiate. Meneses was not to be hectored into submission.

When the English became more pertinacious and began to use force, he engaged vigorously. At the very first broadside Joseph was struck by a cannon-ball which shattered him utterly. The action was continued for a time, and then the two English ships fell back. There was a doubt as to who should succeed Joseph. At dark Meneses anchored at one of the Comoros, and kept his lantern burning at the mainmast-head in defiance. A meeting of the Company's officers was held in the *Charles* to settle the question who was in command. Mr Connock, the head of the trading staff, thought that he ought to be the man. But the Company had sent sealed orders to provide for such a case. When they were opened it was found that Captain Pepwell of the *Unicorn* had been named as Joseph's successor. Connock, who disapproved of the attack on the carrack, argued that they should leave her. But Pepwell pointed to the mangled body of Joseph still lying in the cabin, and declared his belief that their honoured commander would never have assailed the Portuguese except for a good reason. For his part, he would revenge his death or go down by the side of the carrack.

Next day they weighed anchor, and so did Meneses. He must have known he was overmatched by his enemies, but he would not even try to evade them. He showed his light in the dark, and kept his flag flying by day. His ship we could see was yare (handy), and his gunnery far better than was usual with the Portuguese. Mr Terry, who has given an excellent description of the action (he was chaplain of the *Charles*) in his *Voyage to the East Indies*, noted an unusual gravity and appearance of piety in the crew at morning prayers. In a general way they made an irreverent congregation. But that morning they were solemn, for



which of them could feel sure he would not lose the number of his mess before the day was out?

The third day came with a red dawn. When the English ships closed on the Portuguese again they had good reason to know that the affair was serious indeed. A shot hit the muzzle of one of the guns on the half-deck of the *Charles*, the space between poop and mainmast, and broke it to pieces. The splinters were driven furiously on Pepwell and others. He was struck on the jaw, and his left eye "cut to ribbons." A splinter was driven between the bones of his leg. In an agony of pain he fainted and was carried into the cabin. They thought he was killed. Another fragment of the gun tore the brawn from an arm of the sailing master. Subordinates went on with the fight. At last the united English were too much for the carrack. She was shattered, and could fight no longer. But she was not surrendered. Meneses let her drift towards the rocks of the great Comoro. A last effort was made to obtain a surrender. Mr Connock was sent in a boat to call on Meneses to yield. The indomitable old man replied that if the English wished to have the ship they must come and take her with the sword. For himself, he expected to be treated as a gentleman. What he actually meant by the words we translated in this way, was probably that the English might take it that he was a gentleman, and understand that he would not yield to "pirates." During the night the carrack was carried further in, and became a total wreck, but the crew was saved. Dom Manuel de Meneses was a gentleman, and he saved his honour. The English went on considerably battered and with an enhanced opinion of the Portuguese. Pepwell recovered from his wounds for the time, but died in India fourteen months later. We

may cut this story of the ransoming of carracks at its noblest part.

A greater feat lay a short way ahead. The promoters were in the factory at Surat. There the Company's servants had become possessed with a belief that Persia presented a grand opening for trade. The future was to prove that they were too hopeful, but their confidence was not without excuse. The Shah, Abbas the Great, was in the midst of his long drawn-out wars with the Turks. As the whole frontier was in a whirl of confusion, the caravan routes which in quiet times carried the trade of Persia to and from the Syrian ports were impassable. His revenue suffered accordingly. Naturally, he looked about for an alternative, and he thought one was to be found by promoting a flow of commerce through his recently acquired ports on the south-west coast. The road lay through rugged mountains infested by predatory hill-tribes. Still, there was an opening for trade by way of Gombroon, in the Strait of Ormuz, and by Jask just outside. Therefore he encouraged foreign traders to come by that door. The London Company was offered favours, and if there was no opposition from a third party a brisk interchange of goods and bullion might have gone on for a time, until in fact the restoration of peace with Turkey should reopen the caravan routes. But there was opposition. It came as a matter of course from the Portuguese. They held the island of Ormuz with a garrison and a squadron. Here, as at Surat, they followed the policy of the dog in the manger. They could not have given the Shah what he needed, even if they had been willing. They would not so much as promise to help except upon terms so onerous that Abbas would not hear of them.

All the conditions which had produced the clash at Surat

were present. The Shah was inviting the English to come, and they were eager to go. The Portuguese were blocking the way. Abbas could do nothing on the water, but the Company could. Ships were sent to Jask, and factors appointed to work the caravan routes from the coast to Shiraz and Ispahan. Next came a succession of clashes with the Portuguese. They did no better than usual, and the Company's men retaliated by taking prizes.

At some time in the course of this exchange of counter-checks quarrelsome, the rulers of the Company came to the conclusion that there was no solution for a most vexatious tangle but one—to wit, the expulsion of the Portuguese from Ormuz. It was not an undertaking to be proclaimed from the house-tops. King James, who was trying to arrange a marriage for his son with a Spanish infanta, could not have allowed of such an act of war. But, say the Spaniards, one can "catch under cover, and kill on the sly." If the Company could not well fall on Ormuz openly, what should prevent it from lending aid to our good friend Shah Abbas? Of course, for a consideration! And Abbas was swearing by the tombs of his illustrious ancestors to give an ample equivalent for our services—privileges in trade, and not only so, but one-third of all the customs dues to be levied at Gombroon till the end of time. The Company decided to help him. That this was its deliberate purpose is clearly shown by its acts, which are far better evidence than words.

The masters in London prepared to send out a force which, when united with the ships already in the East, would be sufficient to cover the passage of a Persian army into Ormuz. And they selected Captain Shilling for the command. Shilling had sailed for them before. He had been master in one of the King's ships, and the Lord High

Admiral had a lien on his services, but was persuaded to allow him to go again. On his way out Shilling made the usual stop at Table Bay. He met several Dutch vessels, and they all foregathered in the most friendly style. English and Netherland seamen were fighting like cat and dog in the Indian Archipelago, but in the Indian Ocean they were on the best of terms—particularly when what was in the air was some damage to be done to the Portuguese. The General was a man of foresight and comprehensive views. He had reflected that our interests must suffer if any other people (say, our good friends the Dutch) were to take hold of Table Bay. So, with the goodwill of the Netherlanders present, as we are assured, he ceremoniously took possession, hoisted a flag on a little mound, and proclaimed King James I sovereign of all Africa (1620). Having, as far as in him lay, made this handsome addition to his King's dominions, he went on his business to the north. The advantage to be gained by occupying Table Bay had been seen by the factors in 1613.

The first step to the capture of Ormuz was to clear the Portuguese squadron stationed there off the sea. The needful was done by two somewhat obscure but decisive encounters in the neighbourhood of Jask, on the coast of Macran. In one of them Shilling was killed. But other captains replaced him, and the enterprise went on. What delay there was came from the Persian side. Shah Abbas was too busy on the Turkish frontier to direct operations himself. The soldiers so-called, brought by his lieutenant, were a rabble. When they were landed they fought ill, and straggled in search of plunder. If the Portuguese had acted with energy and judgment, they could have cut the mob to pieces easily when once it was beyond the reach of



the covering fire of the Company's four ships and four pinnaces. In truth, the Portuguese were little if at all better. They were largely mere negro slaves and Goanese. They surrendered after a poor resistance, and were shipped off by us to Goa to the number of 2500 men, women, and children. The Persians would have butchered them all but for our protection. Whatever fault the English had to find with the Shah's soldiers as fighting men, they allowed them to be excellent plunderers, and very dexterous in cutting off the heads of prisoners. While our sailors were pressing the attack on the castle where the Portuguese had taken refuge, our allies were making a clean sweep of portable property in the town. There is a gruesome description of the Persian headsman at work in the account given by Mr Monnox of what happened.

The capture of Ormuz dated the downfall of Portuguese power in the Indian Ocean. Their inability to stand up to the English became patent to the native powers. They ceased to be opponents who need be considered. The island was soon deserted, and sank to its present state of barren solitude. In future, what trade there was went by Gombroon, which was renamed Bunder Abbas. It was never as profitable as the Company had hoped. As for the promised third of the customs of the port, Shah Abbas kept his promise after the usual manner of Oriental rulers—not at all. Whether the captain and sailors profited by the plunder of the place is an obscure question. Certain it is that the Company was none the richer. On the contrary, King James compelled it to pay him £20,000 for protecting it against Spain and Portugal, and to pay £10,000 to the Lord High Admiral as his "droits." In vain the Company pleaded that this was not a case of war, and that the Admiral

was entitled to nothing. They were told that if it was not war, it was piracy. So they paid lest a worse thing should befall them.

By a coincidence of a truly dramatic order the years which saw the Company's triumph in the Indian Ocean witnessed its final downfall in the islands. Coen had expected the English to return to Java in 1620, and had concentrated a large force of ships to meet them. When Martin Pring, who had succeeded Dale and had been joined by other vessels from England, did come through the Straits of Sunda, he found himself in face of a fleet which he could not have engaged without extreme rashness. There was, however, no occasion for fighting. News was brought at this very moment that the Governments of England and of the United Netherlands, exasperated by the endless complaints and recriminations of the two Companies, had taken them firmly in hand, and had imposed a treaty of peace on them. The two were to unite, to the extent that a council was to be formed of four Englishmen and four Netherlanders, which was to control their common interests and to settle all disputes. The English were to be allowed to re-establish all their factories and to enjoy one-third of the trade of the Spice Islands. Each Company was to provide ten ships for defence. This clause of the treaty would of itself have been enough to reduce the whole elaborate settlement to a nullity. The London Company simply could not afford to set aside ten ships for work which returned no profit. It did not even attempt to comply with its obligation. Of course, the Dutch maintained that this failure had freed them from all obligations to keep to the treaty.

Apart from this reason why the London Company should

be at a disadvantage, the Dutch had now organised themselves so thoroughly under the sagacious direction of Coen, and had taken such firm possession of the market, that competition with them was becoming hopeless. The London Company was driven to bow to necessity. In little more than a year and a day it had resigned itself to withdraw all its factories in the eastern islands of the Archipelago, and to submit to do what business it could in the great western islands under the predominance of the Dutch. They were prepared to tolerate the English in Sumatra and Java, even in their own port of Batavia. But they were the masters. The horrible outbreak of fear and cruelty known as the "Massacre of Amboyna" came after the London Company had confessed its defeat, and had ordered the withdrawal of its factories from the more remote stations in the islands. The massacre cannot be ignored, but will find its place elsewhere.

## CHAPTER VII

### IN THE OTHER INDIES

WHILE the London and Dutch Companies were founding empires in the East, other corporations of the same nationalities, and created for similar purposes, were running their courses in the West Indies. When we use that name to-day we mean the Antilles, great and small. Our fathers employed it in the wider and Spanish sense, as standing for all those parts of North and South America then in the possession of Spain, or at least claimed by her. The Spanish Main of tradition and romance was not the sea, but the mainland. The Spaniard divided his domains into *Islas y Tierra firme*—island and solid land—apparently because he had a reserved conviction that all isles are, or are liable to be, afloat.

A strict economy must be exercised in deciding on what is proper to be said in these pages concerning the whole number of the companies which acted in the New World. The fact, an undeniable one, that the Pilgrim Fathers of 1620, and the great Puritan emigration of ten years later to Massachusetts Bay, obtained their respective titles from the Western Virginia Company, or a successor, cannot be made an excuse for going into a history of New England. The Pilgrim Fathers bought themselves out of the hands of the Company at home, and that quickly. The charter which John Winthrop and his friends took with them was, and as one can see clearly was meant to be, a technical



excuse for asserting and maintaining complete independence. Because they had this instrument with them, they were free from control by a board at home. In New England the colonists formed a self-governing political and religious body, and were resolved to remain one. The soil was poor, the climate harsh, the life was one of grim austerity and labour, but there they could be themselves. And that was so much their fixed intention that, when they were invited to leave the cold north and betake themselves to the genial sun of the Antilles, they firmly refused. It was their resolution to live as they had lived at home. So they said, and they implied that they would live where they were masters.

Then again, there were other corporate bodies at work in the New World which do not come under the same head as the great Chartered Companies we are concerned with. They were trading associations, which did not exercise powers of jurisdiction delegated to them by the State: The Guinea Company was one, and the South Sea another. Both were created for no more noble purpose than to promote the vilest of all infamies—the slave trade.

The Virginia Company had made a bad start, therefore its efforts were inevitably directed during the next stage to the undoing of mischief. That is slow work, and the Company was not quite successful even to the end, to the year when it was forced to resign its charter in 1623. As it had sent out rogues and vagabonds to colonise, it had ruefully to confess that they would not work better in Virginia than they did at home. Moreover, some of them—who were in Bacon's mind when he wrote his essay "On Plantations"—drifted back, and spoke abundant ill of the Company. It lost public favour, and was hard pressed to

get money. In its distress it sought for and obtained leave to open a lottery, which, in plain words, was a device for raising capital by gambling. Nor was the trouble only over there. A very dreary tale of faction and merely personal quarrels in the governing body runs through its brief history. Far more space than the subject deserves would be required to record and disentangle all the differences of Sir Thomas Smythe, who was an honourable man, and Sir Edwin Sandys, who was even a noble kind of man, and the Earl of Warwick, who will be better seen later on, and Nicholas Ferrar, who was a saint. After all, they were of small meaning in our national life. The Spanish ambassador, Zuñiga, had some excuse for japing over the lottery and the rest. He was convinced that the Virginia Company was on the way to bankruptcy, and that nothing very dangerous to Spain could come of its doings. But he did not allow for the average Englishman bestirring himself on the other side of the Atlantic, who was the important man.

There is a fair excuse for forestalling events, and telling of the end of the Company now. Complaints of colonists, financial difficulties, and an Indian massacre of some of the settlers combined to bring the Company into bad odour. And there was certainly something else. We have the authority of Nicholas Ferrar for the report that the Marquis of Hamilton and the Earl of Pembroke solemnly affirmed to the Earl of Southampton (Shakespeare's Earl, a great favourer of the Company and a member of the Board) that they had heard the Spanish ambassador, Gondomar, tell King James: "That it was time for him to look to the Virginia Courts (*i.e.* board meetings) which were kept at Ferrar's house, where too many of his nobility and gentry resorted to accompany the popular Lord Southampton, and

the dangerous Sandys. That, though they might have a fair pretence for their meetings, yet he (the King) would find in the end, that court would prove a seminary for a seditious Parliament. That they were deep politicians, and had farther designs than a tobacco plantation. That their proceedings in the issue might cause, if not timely prevented, occasions of difference between His Majesty and his (Gondomar's) master, the King of Spain. For he had heard rumours that, once being numerous, they intended to step beyond their limits, and for aught he knew, they might visit his master's mines. Adding that he had occasions of late to have a conference with the managers concerning a ship laden with silver which was cast away, and that he found them subtle men—men of high courage, men who no way regarded either his master, or their own."

Now we have here a simple alternative. Either Gondomar said what is attributed to him, or there must have been deliberate lying among such men as Ferrar, Southampton, Sandys, and Pembroke, which is not to be believed. And this is what the crafty ambassador would be likely to say, what would influence King James and was substantially true. These boards of colonising companies were breeding grounds of opposition to arbitrary government such as the King and his son intended to maintain. That fact is quite enough to explain why the King ordered an inquiry into the doings of the Company, why the inquiry was hostile, and why the charter was surrendered. The London branch was succeeded by a Royal Council. The Western branch was replaced by another Council.

There was one man who was more steadily active, over a longer period, in promoting colonial adventure during this period than any other. He was in a real sense the centre of

one great outgrowth of English energy—Robert Rich, the second Earl of Warwick of that creation. His life lasted from 1587 to 1658 and was, till age and the rise of a new generation relegated him to retirement, more busily and diversely employed within certain bounds than that of any of his contemporaries. The limits within which he bestirred himself were wide. They were imposed by the seas east and west. He acted on them or over them. The Rich family belonged to the new nobility which arose under the Tudors by the law, and Henry VIII's plundering of the Church. If Clarendon is to be believed, he was a jovial personage who lived at his ease, but favoured the Puritans because they were the most effective part of the opposition to Charles I. But Clarendon is not to be implicitly trusted when he was drawing portraits of the wicked people who fought the King, and who therefore had done those things "against which God's judgment is denounced, and for which hell fire is prepared." Warwick lived as other men of his birth and standing did in society and about the court. He was most certainly not a crapulous man. That he was provoked by the curious spectacle presented by two misguided sovereigns, with a group of officials who thought they knew on which side their bread was buttered, and a few theorists and pedants with Laud and Strafford, who took their own assumptions for realities, at their head, all joining to treat this people as so much potter's clay which they could mould as they pleased, is highly probable. We have nothing to do with his parliamentary activities nor his command of the fleet for the Parliament in the Civil War, but only as a promoter of maritime and colonial adventure.

All he did was not to be praised. He speculated in what was little if at all better than piracy, sending out ships to



the East to interlope at the expense of the East India Company and plunder native traders. He was always investing in "privateers," which sailed under some foreign flag and hunted for booty. All this was done to fill his own pocket, and was essentially sordid. On the other hand, he supported the Virginia Company, helped the Puritan settlements in North America, and did his best to promote English enterprise other than mere armed smuggling in the West Indies. On the coast of North America he had, by a piece of good fortune, acquired rights which enabled him to be helpful to solid colonisation. When the new and purely administrative Council for Virginia, formed after the surrender of the charter in 1623, took the work in hand, it was instantly faced by the old lack of pence which had vexed the Company. Nothing was to be looked for from the Crown. Subscribers of capital did not come forward readily after all that had happened of late years. So the Council divided the territory granted in 1606, and gave the portions to those who had contributed to the stocks of the Company. Massachusetts Bay fell to Warwick, and from him Humphrey and Endicott received in 1628 the title which enabled them to prepare the way for the great Puritan settlement. Though this book cannot be another history of New England, it is appropriate to note how the Chartered Company did, even after its death and indirectly enough, promote the expansion of Old England.

His experiences while he was on the committee had taught Warwick two lessons—that there was little hope in such colonists as had been sent to Virginia, and that Spain would do all the harm her weakness allowed her to inflict on intruders into what she considered her domain. It is a dreary enough business to keep on recording stories of sloth,

vagabondage, and violence. And there was more than enough of all of them in the early days of Virginia. The Company came to the reasonable conclusion that it must provide a better administration than could be drawn from the settlers themselves. It was hoped that the presence as governor of a gentleman of high social standing would inspire respect among the unruly. Lord Delaware came out (1609) and went back in about a year. He said his health had broken down. There were those who did more than insinuate that his Lordship's bad health was just his boredom. His place was taken by his marshal, the Sir Thomas Dale whose unfortunate history in Java and death on the coast of Coromandel have been told. Dale was less delicate than the Lord, and was a fit enough man for the work to be immediately done. He had sufficient trustworthy support to enable him to hang the most outrageous among the settlers, and to bring the others to heel by the unstinted use of such methods of reforming rogues and vagabonds as were employed at home in England. Lasting good was effected, work began to be done, the country cleared for cultivation, and tobacco produced in increasing quantities. Dale could claim, when he finally left the colony in 1616, that he had started it on the right road.

Coercion was useful with such disorderly persons as the first settlers. The Reverend Mr Whitaker, a Church of England man of Puritanical leanings, who saw them, was provoked to vehement denunciation of them and their ways. "We go out," said he, "talking of bringing the benighted natives to Christianity, and we behave so abominably that I wonder God does not sweep us off the face of the earth." The zeal of the Lord's house carried Mr Whitaker beyond the bounds of discretion. Things were not quite so bad as

that. There was disorder and vice, but there was better. Men who were checked in Virginia wandered away to the lawless West Indies to live by the armed smuggling and piracy then and long afterwards rampant in those seas. The drain threatened to carry the population off to the Antilles. At the sight of this evil the wiser members of the Company bethought them of a remedy, at once more gentle and better calculated to prove effectual than Dale's halters and whipping posts. If you really wish to fix a man solidly at home and moderate his excesses, the best way is to provide him with a wife. A syndicate was formed within the Company to forward the good work. Inquiry showed that a young woman could be provided with a box full of clothes and some house linen and taken to Virginia for £10. The syndicate recruited for their first consignment eighty damsels, whom they described in seventeenth-century phrase as "uncorrupted virgins"—quite accurately no doubt—and sent them under the supervision of a judicious widow.

The organisers of this much-improved emigration did not act in a spirit of pure charity. They looked to be repaid, and also to make a little honest profit for themselves. Therefore they began by noting that freedom of consent is essential to the validity of marriage. Having laid this down, they went on to explain that, while there must be no question of purchase or coercion, the planters who were helped to a wife might reasonably be asked to make a voluntary gift to the syndicate of 200 leaves of the best tobacco. It is satisfactory to know that the whole number of provided brides reached Virginia safely, were all "very lovingly" received, and married within a fortnight. The episode has enough of the comic in it to afford a pleasant relief to the rather drab, not to say dingy, early records of Virginia.

If the strength of the Spaniards had been equal to their will the beginnings of the colony would have been arduous indeed. King Philip's ministers and officers at home and in Cuba were always talking of strong measures it would be well to employ to stamp the settlement out. But Spain was now both weak and timid—not wise enough to renounce pretensions it could no longer enforce, but sufficiently malicious to keep talking of what it would have been rash to do, and to indulge in useless gestures of menace. All the Spaniards did against Virginia was to send a vessel under the command of a Captain Medina to look into the Chesapeake. Medina was, as the story is told, so foolish as to land with another Spaniard and a renegade Englishman, whose name is given as Lymprye. All three were captured by the colonists. An Englishman who was foolish enough to swim off to the Spanish ship was seized and held as a hostage. The capture and counter-capture led to and ended in floods of talk and correspondence. Medina and his two companions were kept as prisoners for years. The two Spaniards were in the end released, and the renegade was hanged. I am not at all sure that the true truth of this story has not been lost beyond recovery. Medina's capture, which has the air of having been sought by himself, may have been an episode in the endless smuggling intrigues of "the Indies." The Spanish creoles, who were very ill-supplied from home with clothes and other necessities, were at all times most willing to trade with English or other smugglers. It is certain that Englishmen lived in Spanish colonies on quite friendly terms with their neighbours, and to all seeming in safety. That fact alone would, of course, encourage Warwick and all speculators in the smuggling trade. At the outside, the Medina episode could do no more



than show that the King of Spain's officials would like to suppress intruders if they but could.

The much-talked-of Indian massacre of 1622 need not be told in detail. The mere fact that the English were clearing the forest to open the ground for cultivation, or to gain timber for export, injured the Indian. The game was driven away. The native Virginians did cultivate their own corn, and they fished. But they depended on the game for meat. Of course conflict broke out, and acts of brutality were committed on both sides. The capture of Pocahontas was an incident in the conflict. The massacre was the outcome of it all. As the Indians were but a feeble folk, they could do nothing when they met a group of armed whites. Isolated men and unprotected women and children in lonely shanties were tomahawked—a beastly spectacle. The repression was naturally fierce, but Virginia never was the scene of such murderous Indian wars as were fought with the warrier tribes of the north.

Those members of the Virginia Company who went on with the work of colonisation, largely under the leadership of Warwick, did unquestionably hope to get their money back with interest. But they were also intent on continuing the patriotic fight with Spain, and the struggle with the Papal "Kingdom of Darkness." Their experience had shown them that in the New World they must fight for their settlements, and they knew very well that the influence of the Spanish party at Court would be used against them at home. They may not have been acquainted with all the details of Zuñiga's activity or Gondomar's. It may not have come to their knowledge that Sir William Monson, Vice-Admiral of the Narrow Seas, had given, or had professed to give, information likely to injure the Company, to

the Spanish ambassador. Monson, one of the Elizabethan heroes of the war with Spain, pocketed a yearly allowance from Philip III. So did not a few other officials and courtiers. One of them was Salisbury, King James's most trusted minister. It is true that he appears to have done nothing for his fee. But Monson did something. It was also a fact that the Spanish envoys were for ever intriguing with discontented Roman Catholics. There was an endless coming and going between English Roman Catholic centres and the Spanish court. It is quite possible, seeing how much Spanish official undertrappers were open to bribes, that the secrets of the ambassador were betrayed. If so, the anti-Spanish party would learn that he was instructed to find a way of sending trustworthy Roman Catholics into the Company's ships to act as spies. There was no lack in that age of such adventurers as Francis Lymprye. It is certain that the Spaniards were well informed of English doings. But so were the English of the Spanish. Napoleon made the shrewd observation that those who are base enough to act as spies will be capable of spying for both sides at once. Perhaps those who had inside knowledge of the Satan's invisible world of "military information" between 1814 and 1818 might be able, if they were free to speak, to quote cases in point. All these subtle intriguers were as often as not dancing in a net under the very eyes of the persons they thought they were deceiving.

Whatever the resolute colonisers had heard, they knew what they meant to do. And they held opinions which nerved them to go to the utmost against Spain, which was the close ally of the Papacy. The religious world in England was divided into (1) Protestants who were members of the Church of England, but not Puritans. The modern affecta-

tion, which denies that the Church of England is Protestant, came out of Oxford at a later date. (2) Puritans who also were members of the Church of England, but were first and foremost enemies of the Church of Rome. (3) The Roman Catholics. The first had a certain respect and even tenderness for the third, and a leaning to their ceremonial. The second hated both. The third was for them the Scarlet Woman on the Seven Hills drunk with the blood of the Saints. They thought the first would be even as she was, if they could. The political dissensions between King and Parliament, the growing resentment of many against the very notion that they were to be kneaded and shaped at discretion by the Lords Anointed, Archbishops, Secretaries of State, and Lords Deputy, had helped the Puritans to recruit large numbers of Englishmen whose motives were not primarily religious. The root and branch men, as they came to be called, led, just as the ardent Calvinists of the Netherlands ruled their coalition of Republics, though the great majority of the people were Roman Catholics or Lutherans. In every great struggle and in all lands and times, leadership falls to those who are for "thorough," those who are for destroying what they hate, those who smite with a whole heart. In the early middle seventeenth century that type in England was Puritan. The reverence for the Crown was strong. King James disliked and shrank from the Puritans. King Charles detested them. Years passed before their opportunity came at home. They could only band together quietly, test one another, seek for alternatives. Winthrop and his band found theirs on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, another body of them tried to provide their refuge far away to the south.

Their Old Providence Company was a failure. It did not

provide a home for Englishmen or Puritans. It did much more to promote buccaneering, and it was, as one must needs confess, justly stamped out by the Spaniards, almost to a day when the Civil War was beginning, and when it had been defiled by vile murders. And yet the Old Providence Company was an important and a fruitful enterprise. First and foremost, it kept together, and kept in training, the staff of the force which beat down King Charles in the Long Parliament and the Civil War. Putting aside Cromwell, who was farming his land, perhaps brewing, and undoubtedly thinking his thoughts in Huntingdon, it may fairly be said that all the most important leaders of the Puritan opposition in the Long Parliament worked together in the Old Providence Company. Pym was the most active of them all, and with him were Warwick, Hampden, Rudyard, Saye and Seale, St John, Nathaniel Rich, and others. Cromwell was at any rate connected by family relationship with several of them. Gondomar's warning to King James did, indeed, apply to them. They had much more in view than a tobacco plantation, and they were subtle men—men of high courage, men who no way regarded either his master or their own.

It was thoroughly in keeping with all the conduct of his affairs by King Charles that this body, which was to have so great a part in destroying him, came into being with his leave, and even his favour. It was formed and obtained its charter during the war with Spain, which began in 1625. A more wretched war never was. The one operation carried out during the whole five years it lasted was a miserably organised and despicably conducted attack on Cadiz. The "combined operation" came back with the shame and the odd hits. Then privateering went on, and as we had many



ships trading overseas, and the Spaniards had few, they stood to gain at that game. They captured in five years 200 vessels belonging to Bristol, and made rich prizes from the Levant Company. The counter-stroke planned by the Company was the best attempt made on our side to play them a return match.

Old Providence (which no one has any longer the least excuse for confounding, as many have done, with the other Providence in the Bahamas) is an oval island six miles long and four wide, hilly, well watered, and covered with trees, stretching north and south, and lying off the coast of Nicaragua. It contains one fairly good harbour on the west side, and a little peninsula projects from the north which offers a useful position for a fort. To-day it belongs to Colombia and is known as Santa Catalina. The English Company proposed to include another island, San Andrea in Spanish, known on our old maps as Henrietta. It lies sixty miles to the south-west of Old Providence, is sixteen miles long and four wide. Little was done with Henrietta, mainly no doubt because, unlike Old Providence, it is not easily defended.

The letters patent which gave the Company its title and authority were dated 4th December 1630. They were issued to "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of the City of Westminster, for the Plantation of the islands of Providence or Catalina, Henrietta or Andrea, and the adjacent islands lying upon the coast of America." Adjacent must be understood in a very wide sense. The sphere of action assigned to the Company stretched from 10° to 20° N. latitude and between 68° and 88° W. longitude, 600 geographical miles from north to south, and 1200 from east to west. This considerable space of the earth's surface

includes Jamaica and most of Hispaniola, much of Yucatan and all Central America, and a slice off the north of South America with the islands along the Main as far as Curaçao. The Company's right was to the islands only. As to the value or the quality of that right, the Company must make it good at its own costs and hazards. To the Spaniards the letters patent amounted to an insolent pretension to dispose of their territory, and the enterprises of the English intruders were mere piracy. But the weakness of Spain was so well known that the Company felt confident of being able to carry out its plans.

Those plans were as innocent as was compatible with the fact that a plantation on Old Providence was, in fact, an invasion of territory claimed by Spain, carried out for profit by a private company. The first step to be taken was the establishment of an English Puritan colony which was to cultivate the land, trade with the native population on the Main, and spread sound Christianity among them by precept and example. This settlement was also to be a home for Puritanism, and a rallying point for all of that creed who had sought refuge in America. The Company would have tempted the emigrants who had just landed in Massachusetts Bay to join them if it could. When they were united, they could have taken possession of all uninhabited islands within the limits of their charter, and need not have been so pedantic as to allow themselves to be deterred by the presence of a few Spaniards. They could then, working together, have applied themselves to growing colonial produce and cultivating trade with the Main. It was a good plot, and there were good friends who could have helped, but it broke down for two reasons. In the first place, the New Englanders refused to listen to the charmer, charm he never so wisely.

There may have been some among them who detected the weak point of the Company's promising scheme, which was that Europeans cannot toil on the land in the tropics. Indeed, it was not long before Pym and the others who met at Brooke House were forced to recognise that they were on the wrong road. The colony did not prosper, and could not so long as it tried to be agricultural. Moreover, a small community thrown so far out tended to break into cliques. The Puritan spirit was a contentious one. By its very nature it consisted of men who had their own marked opinions and were firmly convinced that they were right. The ministers selected to lead them were not all virtuous, and the best were apt to be pragmatistical as well as profoundly convinced of their title to be treated with reverence. New Presbyter was often just old Priest writ large. In short, there was not a little "argufying," and many complaints were sent home. It is not a very edifying story.

We hear how Mr Lewis Morgan, minister, fell out with Governor Bell in early days. The Governor was, it seems, carnal-minded, and had ideas as to profit-sharing which were not acceptable to all the planters. So a petition was worked up, and Morgan wrote a covering letter to Sir Nathaniel Rich, "stuffed with bitter expressions" and displaying "a spirit inclined to sedition and mutiny." The letter was entrusted to a Mr Essex who was going home by the *Seaflower*. They met a Spanish vessel in the Florida Straits and, of course, fought. Essex was killed, and when the *Seaflower* reached home all his papers were impounded by the Company. They included a good deal which the authorities were not to have seen. Whereupon orders were sent to Governor Bell to arrest Mr Morgan and send him to England. When he got there, he was wigged,

lectured, and sacked without his wages, but with a compassionate allowance of £5 to keep him going till he found another place. There is much of such matter as this in the Company's papers, and it is, to speak frankly, musty and petty. But more and better material is to be found in the brief history of the Old Providence Company.

As an agricultural and trading colony it was a failure, but it played a part of real importance in the conflict waged against Spain, which insisted on keeping all the islands for herself though she had not occupied any of them except Porto Rico, Hispaniola (*i.e.* at San Domingo and Hayti), Cuba, and Jamaica, the largest and best worth having. The others lay empty, and therefore unprofitable. Nor is there the slightest probability that Spain, with her diminishing population and shrinking resources, could have turned them to profit then or for long afterwards. The rest of the world was not minded to allow her to play the part of dog in the manger over so large a part of the earth's surface. Internal difficulties and national rivalries prevented England and France from taking hold openly and in honourable war of what Spain claimed, but could not grasp. The Netherlands were directing their enterprises, as we shall see, chiefly to another part of America. None of them would prevent their people from seeking a footing in the Antilles, on the clear understanding that they went at their own costs and hazards. It followed, as the night the day, that the work of exploration and colonisation fell mainly into the hands of men who were always adventurous and too often unscrupulous. Armed smugglers, who easily slipped into mere piracy, pervaded the West Indies, the predecessors of the "Brothers of the Coast" and the Buccaneers. The result in the case we are dealing with, was that these un-



disciplined elements swamped the pious and peaceful members of the Company's settlers, and may really without inaccuracy be said to have run away with the Company itself.

The names of a good handful of these heroes, and mention generally of a somewhat bald character of what they did, are to be found in the many little biographies given by Mr Brown in his valuable *Genesis of the United States*, and in Mr A. P. Newton's *Colonising Activities of the English Puritans*, and in Calendars of State Papers. The Camocks, Sussex and Thomas, Elfrith, Boteler, Blauvelt or Blowfield, and many illustrious obscure champions of a dim wide-ranging struggle are easily heard of, but remain dark. Some were plainly scoundrels, others were, one may charitably believe, men who would have traded fairly or have worked plantations quietly if the Spaniards had not persisted in treating them as pirates. As they were forced to know that the gallows or the Spanish *garrote*, strangulation at the *rollo* or pillar of justice, would be their lot if they were captured, they took on a tinge of scoundrelism, and it must be supposed that scrupulous men who preferred to lead an honest life would not have chosen the lawless West Indies to make a living in. It was in the nature of things that the Company could not keep the wilder sort out of its colony, nor even dispense with their services. Perhaps the Puritan Pym and Sir Nathaniel Rich and the fierce Lord Brooke were not averse to avert their eyes from the retaliation inflicted by these fighters on the Spanish supporters of Popery. The end of it was that Old Providence became the headquarters of downright plundering and murder, at the expense of Spanish shipping and coast towns or villages.

It must be confessed that the details of the fighting are of no great interest—not, at least, as a rule. Stories how this

or that raider blackmailed, or did not succeed in blackmailing, the town of Trujillo, or how two English vessels attempted to plunder Santa Marta, how one was becalmed and could not come close enough to the place to be able to do it any harm, and how the other was severely knocked about and glad to come away, grow monotonous. The Old Providence Company and its allies in the West Indies were less fortunate than their followers, the Buccaneers. Esquemelin is not a quite trustworthy narrator, and his chronology is occasionally wild. His devils were neither so tremendous nor so red as he painted them. Yet he leaves one a distinct impression of a lawless world, brutal and highly coloured—presented under the species of blood-curdling melodrama. Dampier and Wafer can record clearly, and Ravenau de Lussan was no mean teller of a strange tale. We have no such witnesses for the years 1630-40 in and about Providence. Our modest aim must be to give the general character of the war in the Caribbean Sea, such as it was.

Providence lies on the direct road from Cartagena de Levante (now in the republic of Colombia) to the west end of Cuba, which was the meeting-place of the Spanish convoys when on their way home with the produce of the Indies. One of the parts of the great outward-bound convoy came out to Cartagena, remained in that port for months, and then sailed under the protection of the men-of-war officially known as the Armada de Galeones for the rendezvous near the west end of Cuba, where it met the convoy from Mexico. Then they went home by the Florida Straits and the Gulf Stream. This was the main and central flow of Spanish trade at our period, the first half of the seventeenth century. It was never directly attacked by our friends from Providence. There has been much loose talk about captures of treasure

ships by pirate adventurers. It is all nonsense. The galleons which carried the treasure—the King's tenth of the output of the mines, and the bullion of the private traders—were too big and too heavily gunned to be assailable by mere privateers. On the not numerous occasions on which they were taken, they fell to the attack of a strong squadron of warships, as was the case when that flower of all the rugged sea-dogs of the Netherlands, Piet Hein, captured two of them in 1627.

The galleons were loaded with goods brought along the coast in light crafts. These feeders of the bigger ships were the prey of the corsairs who infested the Indies. When their enterprises were numerous enough, and also sufficiently successful to suspend the coasting trade, then the convoy was starved. Therefore, though raiders from Providence could not venture to tackle the Armada de Galeones which kept watch over the trading ships of the convoy, they could do it great indirect harm, or even paralyse it entirely. From 1635 till the end this was what was going on along the eastern coast of Central America. The Company had learnt from the attack on the *Seaflower*, and from a futile threat made by the Spaniards against Providence in 1633, that the enemy would suppress it if he could. It was quite ready to retaliate. Pym, who was the ruling spirit, had always advocated war with Spain—the Kingdom of Darkness and the cruel enemy of God's people. In 1635 King Charles was in a peevish mood with Spain, which would not throw her Roman Catholic cause over in order to please him who could do nothing for her. It was a phase of his diplomacy which tried to spin ropes with cobwebs. On the conscientious page of Mr Gardiner it rays out boredom and confusion of mind. Pym and his friends

took advantage of the royal velleity, and asked for leave to make reprisals. It was given in a manner perfectly characteristic of the royal martyr. The King would not issue letters of reprisal in the regular way. The written letter remains, and might give trouble if or when another royal velleity was playing with plans for an alliance with Spain. Then it would be convenient to be able to assert that the Company's reprisals had not been authorised. So, when the formal application was made to him, he nodded his head and said, "Yes." A nod and a word pass, and cannot be quoted in evidence. Of course this piece of shirk was no authorisation, but it was enough for the Providence Company.

Now began a story such as could not have been told after the seventeenth century. The Company set about making reprisals. Its own resources were not enough, and it had need of the co-operation of others. But those others must not be allowed to act for their own advantage alone. So the servants of the Company were instructed to arrest and send back all English adventurers who might be found within the limits of its charter—unless they came with its licence. And that licence was readily given to all who would pay for it. Therefore the Providence Company, which was to have founded a Puritan colony and to have spread pure religion became an association for the business of privateering.

Nothing was more natural than the fury of the Spaniards as they suffered under the provocations of the Providence corsairs, and saw with what contempt they were treated. They had been furious before, and were often to be again, without the least effect. This time their rage was not idle, for the man was there when the hour came.

Don Francisco Diaz de Pimienta (*i.e.* Pepper, a truly



significant name) was a gentleman of a known house settled in the Canary Islands. He was at once a Spaniard of the old quality and a child of the counter-Reformation—much such another as Tilly or Pappenheim of the Thirty Years' War. He was a fanatic who was also a clear-headed fighting man, who did not ask the divine powers to work miracles for him, but strove to gain their help by toiling his own hardest. In 1640 Pimienta was Captain-General of the Armada which had come out to Cartagena. A second ill-conducted attack on the island had been made by a Spanish officer named Maldonado, and had been repulsed. Don Francisco was wrought to white heat by the sight of the harm done to his countrymen, and the insolence, as he was bound to think it, of the heretics. And the Governor of Providence had given him just cause for anger by butchering the prisoners he had taken from Maldonado after they had been received to quarter. It was a gross breach of the "customs of the wars" as they were known to the soldiers of all ages.

Pimienta availed himself of the long delays imposed on the convoy by the slow process of collecting goods by pack mules, ox wagons, and lighters on rivers. He took a quick despatch boat, and went off home to appeal to the King for some help and also for authority to attack Providence in an effectual manner. The blazing zeal of the man seems to have set the torpid Government of Philip IV on fire. Pimienta got what he asked for, and came back to Cartagena. The necessary, but not more than the necessary, time was devoted to organising the expedition. Then, with eight larger craft and two small ones, carrying in all 2000 men between soldiers and sailors, he soused down on Providence on 24th May 1641. This time the attack was made *secundum artem*. The previous Spanish assaults had been made

on the settlement, New Westminster was its name, by the natural harbour on the north-west. They were bound to be front attacks on stockades, and had been beaten back. Pimienta landed the 800 men who could be spared from the ships on the south coast of the island. They were put ashore in flat-bottomed boats which could be brought over the reefs. The stockades were probably complete on the sea side, but were open towards the land. The Spaniards had no difficulty in mastering the various forts so-called, one after the other. No heroic defence was made. Governor Carter, who had been so ferocious with the prisoners taken from Maldonado, came to propitiate Pimienta in the most respectful manner.

A solemn *Te Deum* was chanted in the market-place in the presence of the English settlers, who numbered 400. It was not the least of the causes for satisfaction felt by the Spaniards, that they rescued a number of missionary friars whom the English had kidnapped and were holding as prisoners. Pimienta, who appears as very much the gentleman all through, allowed the women and children to go at once in English vessels. He brought the men to Cadiz with him when he took the convoy home.

For a time the Providence Company lived in a ghostly way as an excuse for despatch writing, pamphlets, and law-suits, but in 1638 the first Bishops' War had given the signal to begin to the Great Civil War. The men who had formed it had greater matters to think of, in Parliament, in the field, and the Channel. Cromwell remembered it when he sent his great combined expedition to the West Indies and took Jamaica. But that was a great enterprise of State, and nowise the work of a Chartered Company.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WORK OF THE TWO COMPANIES

ALL that was done by the English and the Dutch East India Companies after the date at which we left them in an earlier chapter would, even if told in the jejune fashion by mere lists of names and dates, fill a book of some proportions. But a torrent of details leaves no definite impressions, in other words, it tells nothing. We know only what we can remember. The rational wish of mankind is to know the character, and the results of the labours of those who have made history.

When Dale retreated to the Coromandel coast, and Coen had founded Batavia and had also made a clean sweep of the scattered English vessels on the coast of Sumatra and in the Gulf of Siam, the two Companies were established in their respective domains. Whatever lay west of the Straits of Malacca and of Sunda was open to both. Whatever lay east was open to the Dutch without qualification, and to the English in so far as the Dutch did not try to stop them from coming. There was no more open conflict for two reasons. In the first place, the Governments of England and of the United Netherlands stood so much in need of mutual support that they imposed peace on their companies. In the second place, the Netherland Company, under the masterly direction of Coen, had taken possession so thoroughly, and had so fully organised its trade, that it could

defy competition in those waters. That Martin Pring came through the Straits of Sunda in 1620 with half a score or so of ships, and found himself faced by a far stronger force concentrated to meet him by Coen; that news came from home at that very moment of an arrangement made in Europe, according to which the Companies were to divide amicably and live as brothers in future; that this attempted settlement proved utterly futile because it imposed on the English Company the obligation to provide half of a fleet of twenty warships for common defence, which it could not have done without incurring bankruptcy; that Coen took advantage of the London Company's inability to carry out this clause of the treaty to disregard all the rest; that he perpetrated a loathsome massacre of our native friends in the Banda Islands; and that the directors in London came sadly to the conclusion that its factories east of Java were not paying their way, and decided to withdraw them—all this would make a longer story than we can stop to tell. After our Company had acknowledged itself defeated, there came in the first days of 1623 the odious massacre of Amboyna. The Dutch governor of this island professed to believe that he with his hundreds of soldiers, his three forts, and his warships, was in danger of attack by a handful of English merchants and clerks. He took advantage of some foolish exhibition of curiosity on the part of a Japanese in English employ to accuse the factors of a conspiracy to attack him. Then he extorted confessions by a gross abuse of torture, first telling his victims what they were expected to say, and then tormenting the unhappy men till they repeated what was demanded of them. A number of the English and of natives in their employ were executed as conspirators. This was without exception the most re-



volting, the most unpardonable of all the acts of violence which Europeans perpetrated on one another during all their wars in the East. Yet it had astonishingly little effect on the relations of the two peoples at that time. A storm of anger did break out in England, but it died down in a few months. Even in the East the outrage was soon forgotten. When the Governor of Amboyna, Herman van Speult, was sent to Cambaya by his masters, he was well received by the English factors at Surat, who desired the help of the Dutch against the Portuguese.

In 1623 there were the Netherlanders with their headquarters at Batavia in Java, and there were the English who did, indeed, cling to their factory at Bantam, but were more and more devoting themselves to the mainland of India. The leadership in the whole adventure belonged, and continued for a couple of generations to belong, to the Dutch Company. That being so, it is most critical to take Batavia as the centre of a first general survey.

The comprehensive glance of Governor-General Coen had surveyed the vast spaces of the Eastern seas. His organising and orderly mind had divided them into "quarters." He had laid down the main lines of the policy to be adopted in the East. At the centre were Java and Sumatra with their dependent little islands, together with the sea north and south. This was the foundation of all. Opposite on the mainland were Burmah and Siam, the Malay Peninsula, and Cochin-China—markets for sale and purchase. East and north-east lay Japan and China—other markets. The western quarter stretched to the Coromandel coast and the Bay of Bengal. Round Cape Comorin were the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf. The Netherlands were to be active everywhere, but not in the

same way. At the centre there was dominion and colonisation. In the Spice Islands there was some colonisation, but not on a great scale. Elsewhere there were to be centres of trade, exchanges, and marts firmly held for safety's sake, but mere trading-posts. Coen was far too wise to be inordinate. There was nothing in his policy of the Portuguese tendency to grab at any excuse for running up a fort. Indeed, he began by suppressing a round score of factories set up by his predecessors while they were feeling their way. He judged that they were superfluous, or that they interfered with one another. So he cut down the list, preserving only what was necessary. At each centre the natives were encouraged to bring their produce, and to buy. This trade was left in the main to "freeburghers," who were forbidden to touch the home-going commerce. Their function was to feed it, and distribute the goods brought out from Europe by the Indiamen. Their field was the port-to-port trade of the East. To turn to our own activity for a moment, this was our policy too in the end. The English free merchants and free mariners (who were often the same men) answered to the freeburghers of the Dutch; and be it noted that these men on the spot did the bulk of the trade of both nations. At a time when the merchant shipping of the United Netherlands was counted on good authority as amounting to 10,000 keels mostly small, the total number of big Indiamen which came home with rich cargoes might only be a score or less. And the same story has to be told of the London Company. It was by buying in one Eastern land and selling in another that the two European nations dominated Oriental markets and seas. We misjudge and under-estimate the achievements of the Companies if we take into account only their outward- and homeward-bound

voyages from and to Europe. All records are full of this port-to-port activity. A reader who wishes to see an account of it at once agreeable and authentic can consult *A New Account of the East Indies*, by Alexander Hamilton, who was free merchant and free mariner. He ranged the Eastern seas from Bunder Abbas to Amoy, in a big ship with a broadside of guns and a large crew, ready to repel native exactions—or to defy the East India Company. For this stirring Ulsterman “interloped” to its detriment, and his enemies asserted that he was a pirate. Looking between the lines of his truly valuable book, one is tempted to suspect that if he was never positively piratical, he had a smack, he did somewhat grow to. Put the most honest man where there is no law but the law of the fist, and see whether he does not now and then stretch a point.

There is so little good to be said of the Portuguese in the East that simple justice demands note of the fact that Coen adapted their system, with improvements, and through him it came to us, who have worked it still better.

When we look beyond the centre of Dutch power in Java, it is as well to begin with the East and North. By the East is here meant New Guinea, and with it may go mere mention of voyages made by way of that still obscure land to the southward. In one of them the little *Duifken*, the Dove, visited the northern coast of Australia. It preceded Dirck Hertog’s discovery of the western coast, which has been mentioned already, and after him came others, of whom Abel Tasman, who sailed first in 1642, was the greatest. But the Dutch Company made no use of its knowledge of Australia and New Zealand. Indeed it could not, and did wisely by abstaining. These two countries would have had nothing to offer except to a people sufficiently numerous to

be able to colonise on a large scale—which was not the case with the United Netherlands. If the Council at Batavia had known that there was gold in Australia the attempt to occupy would have been made; but settlement had to precede the finding of the gold.

The voyages which went past New Guinea bound to north and north-east had a very different sequel. In 1603 the Netherlands had gained a footing on the south-west of Japan at Hirado or Firado. Ten years later Captain Saris came to that port, invited by a letter from our shipwrecked countryman, William Adams. Nowadays, when Japan is a great naval power and the centre of an active shipbuilding and shipping industry, an effort has to be made to understand why it was that English and Dutch valued it chiefly because they hoped to make use of it as a house of call on the way to China. It was further of some value as a source of supply of silver, to be spent in Chinese ports in the purchase of raw silk, drugs, porcelain, and, when we had learnt its value, of tea. But in itself Japan was not ready to be a considerable trading country. The Japanese cared little for what Europe could bring to them, and had not so far much to supply which Europeans cared to take away. If this had not been the case the Tokugawa Shoguns would never have been able to shut their country to all comers except the Dutch, who were allowed to carry on a strictly limited trade under very ignominious restrictions, at the island of Desima, near Nagasaki. The Japanese did not think they lost anything by excluding outsiders, and the Europeans were not so convinced that they were losers as to be stimulated to try hard to open the door. We all know that the Shoguns were offended and frightened by the activity of Roman Catholic missionaries. With the example



of the Philippines to instruct them, they judged that the missionary was the forerunner of the armed invader; and so, no question of it, he would have been if Spain and Portugal had not been decadent. As the Japanese did not know so much of their neighbours as to understand this truth, they took the timid course of walling themselves in, and it was lucky for us that they did. If they had forestalled their descendants of the nineteenth century by going to work to master the arts of the stranger and to turn them against him, they would, in all probability, have swept Europe out of the Far East altogether. If the Europeans had been allowed to come at all, they would have been confined to the modest place of respectful trader.

There can be no necessity to repeat the painful story of the suppression of Christianity in Japan. The persecution affected us in a rather odd way. The English flag was the St George's cross as now used in the Navy, without the Union in the first quarter. The Spanish flag was a St Andrew's cross, and not the red and yellow ensign of to-day. To the Japanese the cross in either form was a seditious emblem. They protested against its display by us. In vain did we point out that our cross and Christianity were not the same as the Spanish. The Japanese were not to be persuaded. If the trade had been worth keeping this difficulty might have been overcome. But for us it was then a mere loss. The London Company had decided to recall the factory before the edict of expulsion had been issued in Japan, because it was not paying its way. The Dutch, whose flag was a tricolour, or a lion with seven arrows in his paw, and therefore gave no offence, were better treated, though their position was mean enough. They did not, as our malicious old story asserts, tread on the crucifix to propitiate the

Japanese. A Calvinist might have done so without scruple, for to him the crucifix was a "painted dud" and an idol; but they did, as some of them confessed, cringe to obtain the silver they needed for trade with China.

The history of that commerce is one of the strangest on record. Trade with China was not necessarily trade *in* China. The Chinese were not, as has been said already, forbidden to go abroad in search of profit. They did—to Manila on one side, and to Batavia, together with Siam and many other lands and islands. Coen and his successors encouraged them eagerly. In the Far East the Dutch began by plundering the junks on their way to Manila, and such other places as were not in their own possession. They were accused by us, and perhaps with some truth, of carrying on these depredations under the English flag. It was a foolish policy. In exact proportion as they succeeded in destroying the junk-carried trade, they abolished their own chance of prize-money. A little reflection showed them a better way. In 1642 they planted themselves in the island of Formosa, which the Chinese called Taywan, and there set up an exchange and mart. The merely piratical attacks on the junks now ceased, and Formosa became a centre of trade. And so it remained till a Chinese merchant, and pirate, Kwe Sing Kong, whom Europeans called Coxinga, who was fleeing before the Manchu invaders of his country, came with a swarm of junks and a multitude of armed men, and turned the Europeans out in 1662. By that time the old implacable hostility with Portugal was over. Macao could be used as at least a house of call, and the Chinese had been brought to endure, and take their squeeze from, European ships at anchor in the Canton River, and for a time they were suffered to come to Amoy till the Emperor forbade all trade except at Canton.

There were some Englishmen who adopted, and clung to, the belief that the best way to avoid the exactions and frequent insolence of mandarins in Chinese ports was to find a convenient meeting-place where they and the Chinese could do business out of reach of official claws. At the very end of the seventeenth century poor Mr Allan Catchpoole persuaded his masters of the Company to plant a trading-post at Pulo Condore, an island on the coast of Cochin-China. He was placed in command, with a staff of factors. The experiment did not have a fair trial. Catchpoole had enlisted a body of Malays from Macassar as armed guard. These Macassarmen were the most pugnacious of the Malays, and most addicted to the paroxysm of sanguinary fury called "running amok." They saw sufficient cause to fall into a spasm of this kind, and they butchered Catchpoole and most of his staff.

In the China seas, as elsewhere in the East, the work of the Companies was to prepare the way for the time when they were set aside by their Governments, and the duty of representing the civilisation of Europe passed to the State of Great Britain and the United Netherlands alike. During the seventeenth century the leadership belonged to the Netherlands, and not only in the seas of China and Japan. The agents of the London Company cried aloud that they were overpowered by the trade of the Dutch everywhere. There was nothing in the East, after Goa had sunk to be a mere swamp, to be compared to Batavia, whether as place of trade or seat of government. In the years about 1642 Malacca and Ceylon were taken from the Portuguese, and a colony was founded at the Cape. The small republic in the North Sea appeared to have covered the East as it were with a net. Its merchants and skippers competed with the

English even in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. They established themselves on the coast of Malabar and up the coast of Coromandel. They came very near forestalling Clive and the English conquest of Bengal. Everywhere, during the flowering time of their energy, they co-ordinated, developed, and improved native manufactures and methods of trade. They suffered as we did from the erratic violence of rajahs and sultans. But they persisted, retreating here to reappear there, and on the whole they gained ground.

For splendid as it looked, and indeed really was, the appearance was greater than the reality in this Dutch Empire. There was a weakness at the foundation which no wisdom could have removed. At the basis of every European predominance in the East, Near or Far, there lies, and must lie, the mother-country. Now the United Netherlands, let the capacity of its people be of the best, was too small a land, too open to attack at home, to be able to hold what its Company had won against the rivalry of greater powers. The larger territory, the more numerous population, and the extremely favourable insular position of Great Britain gave it advantages which in the end must have told, even if other things had been equal, the other things in this case being the intelligence and the capacity of the peoples.

After the end of the seventeenth century they became very unequal. The desperate struggle with Louis XIV had exhausted the Netherlands and buried them in debt. The death of William of Orange, our King and their Stadtholder, was followed by a deep fall in the ability of the rulers. When France was no longer to be feared after the Peace of Utrecht, all the inherent vices of their hopeless constitution, which tried to make a political body out of fragments each of which claimed to be sovereign and independent, sprang



up into rank growth. It became impossible to obtain prompt united action. Pettiness and torpor covered land and people. The India Company sank with the mother-country. Here, as in Brazil, the expense of maintaining their position exhausted their resources. They had, though not on so great a scale nor in so disastrous a fashion, repeated the error of the Portuguese, by spreading themselves too fast and too far. Ceylon was taken in hand before Java was wholly subdued. Before the middle of the eighteenth century the great "United Netherlands East India Chartered Company" was bankrupt. Before the end its bankruptcy was confessed. It disappeared in 1793 to make room for a government by the mother-country. And it was time for it to go. The spectacle presented by the Dutch settlements in the East was not good to look at, even as described by some of themselves. A European power can rule in the East with a high standard of conduct only on one condition. It must year by year send out young men, and those the best it can find, and as they come, then those who are passing from middle-age to old must go home. The Dutch did not strive to select the best of their youth for the East, and they did try to colonise. The result of every attempt to plant a European race in Java may be sufficiently well studied in that story of Mr Couperus which he named *De Stille Kracht*. It is translated into English, and is a convincing study of that "hidden force" of the East which permeates and disintegrates the European, who cannot, or will not, stand apart from and above races which, be their natural merits what they may, can never combine with his, but only poison and corrupt.

From the middle of the seventeenth century till the disappearance of the Company in 1793, the Dutch rule in

Java was disgraced by meanness. The operations, naval and military, which had to be undertaken to suppress disorders in the smaller islands, were generally but languid. Java suffered from a long succession of wars with the native princes east and west of Batavia. From the year after that city was founded by Coen, it was attacked by the eastern rajahs with great disorderly mobs of ill-armed men. The European discipline and the better weapons of the Dutch made it easy for them to repel these assaults and to scatter the Javanese in the open field. Yet the fighting dragged on, and the conquest was slowly completed. The reason was not only that the XVII Bewindhebbers at home showed little care in the choice of their servants and soldiers. They do, indeed, appear to have acted seriously on the cynical maxim that what was worthless in Europe was good enough for the Indies. But even if they had been wiser in this respect, they followed a bad administrative method on the spot. It was manifestly a rule with the authorities in the great island never to follow up any success they gained in battle. The enemy was habitually allowed to retire unpursued to the mountains—of which Java is full—there to rest, recruit, and pluck up spirit to begin again. The calculation of the Company was that the Javanese would be exhausted in time, and would fall out among themselves. So they would be destroyed by hunger and their own dissensions at a cheap rate for the Company. There was a certain plausibility in the calculation, but it was essentially a piece of mere huckster-like cunning. The practical result was that wars which could have been brought to an end in two well-conducted campaigns dawdled through half a generation, and were in the end far more costly than vigorous operations would have been.

The incident which best gives the measure of the Company's rule in Java during the eighteenth century occurred in 1740, when Adrian Valckenier was Governor-General. The Chinese, who had been encouraged to settle in Batavia by Coen, had grown very numerous by this year. We know from our own experience in Singapore that Chinese secret societies can be dangerous, and that the Chinaman is not incapable of becoming turbulent when he believes himself to be strong. The Dutch authorities were thrown into a panic by some, perhaps real, but also much exaggerated, indications that the Chinese were plotting a revolt, and hoped to seize the island. In a panic, rendered cruel by fear, they fell upon the Chinese about Batavia, who were easiest to be reached, and made a huge slaughter of them. It was a brutal action, and was also stupid. They had killed only a part of the Chinese. Enough of them remained to revolt, take to the hills, and ally themselves with Javanese who were hostile to the Company. There was another long-drawn-out war in Java, and it would have been longer still if the Chinese had not made themselves hateful to their native allies by bestial violence.

The growth of a Eurasian population became another danger to the Dutch rulers. They increased so much in numbers, and secured so large a part of the trade, that they threatened to swamp the Dutch from home. Unless they are very much belied, these people of the mixed blood were extremely vicious. And they too began to conspire. Their plots were punished in a vilely ferocious style. It is true that when in the end the native princes were subdued, and confined to local government functions under Dutch supervision, internal peace and therefore a good measure of prosperity were won for Java. Even a poorish European

rule is more favourable to industry than a native anarchy. Nevertheless, when at last the Company, which had long survived by ingenious financial devices, and by drawing on its land revenue to cover its losses in trade, was forced to confess itself bankrupt, then it was indeed time for it to go.

The future of the London Company depended so fully on the results of their strife with Portuguese or Dutch that their other activities have necessarily been left in the background. And they had others. One of them, and by no means the least important, had for its theatre the Company's room in Sir Thomas Smythe's mansion in Philpot Lane. The practice of forming syndicates for each voyage was a makeshift proper enough to the very early days of experiment, but not as a permanent arrangement. One voyage might be out before the other was back. They fell across one another, and as each had its own factors, and put them at a chosen port of trade, it naturally came to pass that competing agents were left face to face, with no common authority to compel them to work together. Being human, and often very human, they came to loggerheads. One of the services the ill-fated John Jourdain did for his masters was to bring a confusion of this kind at Bantam to peace and unity. It was no less inevitable that muddle should insinuate itself into the Company's account. On one occasion, indeed, the Governor and his council had to confess that God alone knew to whom a sum of money they had in hand rightly belonged. Such excellent men of business as they were came speedily to the conclusion that there must be a change of method. In 1613 it was decided to form a joint stock for four years, the amount being £418,691, to be paid in four equal instalments yearly. The prosperity of the Company, and the increasing confidence



felt in its stability, is shown by the fact that when the four years were just running out, and a new stock was raised on the same lines in 1616, the amount subscribed was £1,629,040, and it was contributed from all hands, and by all classes—15 dukes and earls, 82 knights, including judges, privy councillors, etc., 13 countesses and other titled ladies, 18 widows and maiden ladies, 26 clergymen and physicians, 313 merchants, 214 tradesmen, 25 merchant strangers, and 248 whose class or occupation is not named. The total is 964. It will be seen that if the Company was a London monopoly, its profits were widely shared. And they were substantial. When in 1621 the accounts were made up, it was shown that, in spite of the losses we know of in the Indian Archipelago, the profits made in eight years were  $87\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. On the other hand, we have to allow for the fact that the dividends would not be distributed till the ships had returned and the goods were sold, so that the investor had to wait for his or her money for three years or so, if not more.

The joint stocks for a term of years were but a half-measure, still they were an advance on the too fluid arrangements of the first years. If the times following the winding-up of the second had been prosperous, the Company would surely have formed a permanent general stock like those of the Dutch East and West India Companies. But a long period of losses, difficulties, and struggles at home and abroad lay ahead in 1621, and the evil days did not end till after the restoration of Charles II in 1660. There was even a day between these dates when the Governor and Council were seriously thinking of winding-up their business, and cutting their losses.

The troubles of the Merchants of London were of

domestic as well as foreign origin. For one thing it became decidedly unpopular. An incident which arose out of the disasters of 1619 in the Indian Archipelago may help to explain why it lost favour in humble spheres. A certain Tomasine Powell, widow of a sailor who lost his life in the waters of Java, applied to the Company for relief. Her husband's little venture had gone, and she was in distress. The Company, which had bowels of compassion, did give her £20 as satisfaction in full for the wages due to him and the loss of his modest speculation. It also took a son of hers into its employment. But if the Company thought it had behaved handsomely, Mrs Powell, who was perhaps a somewhat unreasonable woman, was of another opinion. She thought herself entitled to more. As one voice does not make a formidable clamour, she recruited a strong body of other "sorrowing widows," and they all beset the Company's door with petitions and reproaches. This was too much, and they were told that enough had been done for them. Hereupon Tomasine and her sisters, with the determination to be expected of the women of England (which as all the men of the age asserted was "the paradise of wives"), declared that they would complain to the Lords of the Council. Go and complain, said the Company. Then it wrote a statement of its view of the case to the Council—a judicious precaution. When Tomasine and the sorrowing widows did apply to the Council they were told to take themselves off, and that they would be whipped if they gave any more trouble. This was no idle formula in and about 1620. The sorrowful widows fled back to Wapping and to Rotherhithe, leaving the Company in peace. Be it observed that this brutal threat, which would certainly have been carried into effect, was uttered by

distinguished gentlemen just about the time when we all grew so angry with Van Speult for his cruelty at Amboyna. We are not told what the poor women said when they were safe at home. But we can confidently guess that they, and their friends who discussed their grievances with much natural heat, did not scruple to assert that there was no justice in this country for the poor, and that the Company cared nothing for the sufferings of sailors and their wives so long as it could line its own pocket.

Lamentations or abuse from that quarter did not signify. The Company could always find sailors as easily as could the owners of ships in the slave trade, though it was notorious that about half their crews died every year in creeks on the African coast, or during "the middle passage." But another and a far worse matter was that the King thought fit to authorise a rival body to compete with it. And James I did. It is true that he gave no charter to a competing English company; but in his character of King of Scotland he authorised the formation of a Scotch association. The Scots were not sufficiently endowed with capital to be formidable through any resources of their own, but if armed with a royal charter, they would have found all the support they needed in Hamburg or in France. The Merchants of London protested, but they had to compensate the Scots for the surrender of their charter.

Charles I went further than his father. In 1631 he consented to set up a company organised by Sir William Courten or Courteen, son of a Flemish Protestant refugee from Menin. They were to trade to Goa (where the Portuguese, now broken in spirit, were prepared to tolerate them), Malabar, China, and Japan. The London Company complained, but it was accused of not having fulfilled all

its obligations, and was also told that Courteen's association would not do anything to its detriment. It is not worth while to go into a shabby affair which dragged on for years. The association did itself no good, but it did the Company harm, if only by making bad blood with the King. The sad truth is that King Charles had acted in the spirit of the Scotch laird, who, on being given to understand that a gentleman could not do something he was doing to raise the wind, answered that a gentleman must do anything when he is hard pressed for money. He hoped to relieve his chronic financial distress by underhand speculations with Courteen's company. He failed, and only provoked the merchants to look to Parliament. In the end it had to buy Courteen's people in.

This dreary affair is worth mentioning only because it illustrates one of the standing sorrows of the Company—the interloper. He made his appearance as early as 1617, when two ships belonging to the Earl of Warwick, and a foreign partner, appeared in the Indian Ocean. They were promptly disposed of. As they came not for honest trade, but for mere “privateering”—in other words, piracy—they began by attacking a big Surat ship which was carrying pilgrims from Mecca, some of whom belonged to the Court of the Great Mogul. She was rescued by the Company's ships, which also captured the pirates. This energetic action did the Company much good with the Imperial Family, but it had to be paid for in two ways. The Earl of Warwick took the law of the Company, and it was at long last found necessary to pay him damages. And then the Mogul officers found an excuse for calling on the Company's servants to suppress all Europeans who gave offence by assailing the Emperor's subjects by land or sea.



The view taken by the Mogul's officers was natural. The Company claimed, with truth, to be alone authorised by the King to come to Indian waters. It had jurisdiction over its own servants. On one occasion a member of one of its crews was shot publicly at Surat for a criminal offence after regular trial by the factors. But the Mogul's officers did not know, or even could not understand, that the Company had no right to punish Englishmen not in its employment. Therefore, when they had cause to complain of acts of piracy committed by Englishmen, or even by other Europeans whom they could not, or would not, distinguish from Englishmen, they held the factors at Surat responsible, and put them in irons. The end, of course, would be that money had to be spent to soothe the angry native rulers. Before the end of the century this evil rose to a great height. A regular and in a way openly organised pirate industry arose in New England. The colonists wished to obtain Indian goods at a cheaper rate than they were sold by the Company. What was more natural than to fit out armed ships in New England, sail to the East Indies, plunder native craft or villages, and return home with their booty? Their favourite cruising ground was around Babs Key, *i.e.* Perim in the Bab-el-Mandeb. Sea-rovers of the stamp of Avery joined them from Old England. They professed that they did no sin. One of them, when brought to trial in London for piracy, defended himself by saying that he had never been told there was any sin in robbing a pagan.

The Moguls Government took a very different view. When it was provoked by Avery's capture of the *Gunshway*, a big pilgrim ship in which a lady of the Imperial Family was taking passage, it called the Company to account. At last the Merchants were compelled to appeal to the Govern-

ment to give them help. Steps were taken to abate the nuisance. A few of Avery's men were caught and tried—twice. On the first occasion the jury acquitted them—in a disgraceful fashion, said Chief Justice Holt. They were retried on the charge of running away with the ship in which they committed their piracies, and this time, after the jury had been vehemently exhorted by the Lord Chief Justice and the Admiralty Judge, they were condemned. But the most effectual measure of repression was the establishment by Act of Parliament of Admiralty Courts in the East Indies and in the American colonies. It is to be noted that the Act threatened the colonists with the loss of their charters if they failed to co-operate, so notorious was their support of piracy.

That the Company suffered from the general disturbance of all Great Britain by the Civil Wars, which lasted from 1638 till Cromwell imposed peace, was a matter of course. No one could be surprised to learn that when it tried to form another joint stock amid the general agitation, it had a difficulty in collecting £400,000, a fourth of the sum so eagerly subscribed in 1617. Indeed, till the Restoration, when a lasting joint stock was formed, the Merchants contributed all the money themselves in comparatively small sums. The wonder is that so much was forthcoming, and that the trade went on at all. In 1641 the King insisted on commandeering all the pepper they had brought home, promising to repay at the Company's own price when he had sold the spice at a higher figure. Of course the Company was never fully repaid—and not even in part for many years. It had to make a final loss of about £30,000. The stream of its trade ran very low, and was in fact kept going in reduced proportions because individual members sent out

ventured on their personal account, and because the Company was fain to tolerate, and accept fees from, traders whom it would have treated as interlopers if it could.

These years of licence left a bitter inheritance. Men tasted the sweets of "free trade," or the liberty to go out in, or send out, your own ship, and trade for your own profit, which is only part of what the words now mean in the language of political economy. After the Restoration, when the Company had revived and was supported by the King, there were many who were not disposed to submit to the old restrictions. So a fight raged between the Company, resolved to preserve its game from the Cape of Good Hope eastward to Cape Horn, and the poachers, technically known as interlopers. The story is, by the nature of the case, obscure. Interlopers had excellent reasons for keeping their activities quiet. The Company had less reason for secrecy, and it was perfectly ready to take the law of its enemies when it could. There is no difficulty in learning about the stopping of ships known, or suspected, to be fitting out in the Thames for a voyage to the East Indies. The difficulty is to get a good view of the interlopers out there.

Some facts are fairly well known. It was not, and indeed could not well be, a secret that Bangkok in Siam was a haunt of interlopers who sailed from it to Amoy in the East, and Persia in the West. In the absence of a large naval force employed wholly in tracking them down, these enterprising persons simply could not be shut out from the port-to-port trade of the East. It was more possible to intercept the interloper when he tried to land a cargo at home. Even that was not so hard for him as may be supposed. The interloper could work in harmony with the smugglers who carried on the contraband trade across

the Channel. He ran his Oriental goods into quiet bays, just as the smuggler ran brandy and lace. Moreover, when he had made his fortune in the far-off seas, he had a safe way of sending it home. He could buy bills of exchange from the Dutch Company, which was punctilious in fulfilling its engagements. When he had cashed his bills at Amsterdam, how could he be prevented from bringing his money home?

The confused multiplicity of scuffles between the Company and the interlopers solidified itself into regularly conducted battles between two parties—which were at least as much political as commercial. Or rather the commercial question became a kind of thing in action between political parties. The opponents who went in front, and provided the pretext, were on one side the Company with its joint stock and its claim to a monopoly, and on the other the interloper-minded merchants who desired a “free trade.” Whoever wishes to go into the whole subject at length and at large will cut himself out some acres of tiresome reading. If he wants to know the essentials of the debate, he can safely confine himself to the very full report of the great case of Monopolies tried before Lord Jefferies in 1684. The speeches of Counsel, the ablest lawyers of the age, and the judgment of Jefferies, an odious brute and the personification of all that is callous and mean in the character of his profession, but withal a very clear-headed lawyer, cover the whole ground. The Company was a creature of the Royal Authority and had no parliamentary title, wherefore it was bound to be Tory. Its enemies were bound by their interests to hold that Parliament alone could create a monopoly, therefore they were sure to be Whig.



As to the question whether commerce with the East was better conducted by a joint stock company or by an open trade, only an incurable spendthrift of time would waste ten minutes on it. If anywhere in the world there is a *res judicata*, it is this. Does any human being now believe that the whole trade with, and in, the East would be best conducted by a privileged company of monopolists? In the seventeenth century there was still an excellent reason for maintaining one. The State, as matters then were, could not directly protect or control its subjects in far distant regions, because it could not provide the necessary funds. Charles II obtained Bombay by his marriage with Catherine of Braganza, and handed it over to the Company because he could not afford to keep it. He gained Tangier for the protection of the Mediterranean trade, and withdrew his garrison for the same reason. But since the State could not directly do what had to be done, there was no course open to it but to delegate authority to some organisation on the spot which could be trusted to support itself. There was no such body in existence except the East India Company.

Whether the Company could remain as it was in 1688 was another matter. Parliament had won in its long struggle with the Crown, and that it would lay its hand on the Company as it had done on everything else had become inevitable. The way in which the thing, which had to get itself done, was carried out was natural, even obvious. The "interloper minded" clamoured and pressed for their inclusion in the advantages of the Eastern trade. Be it noted that the capital of the Company was tending to concentration in a few hands. The cost of the war with France drove Government to look about for money. One

way of getting the needful funds was to allow a large body of moneyed men to form a new company, and pay handsomely for the chance. So the Company of the Merchants of England was set up over against the Merchants of London. The old Company protected itself by buying a huge hunk of the stock of the new, whereby it put itself in the absurd position that if it ruined its rival it lost its investment, and if it saved its money it also preserved its enemy. There could be but one solution to such a tangle. The two combined, and formed in the first years of the eighteenth century the great "Joint or John Company" which conquered India. And it was an English, not only a London company.

Before, during, and after the Restoration, the Company suffered from an evil it inflicted on itself. The name of the nuisance was "the private trade of the Company's servants." The rulers at home in the City would not engage their men for life, and secure them good pay while they were in India, and a pension if they lived to come home. The servants were hired for a term of years—five was a favourite number—and the masters would not bind themselves to renew the engagements. The pay was miserable, even when allowance is made for the keep given to the staff of the factories. But in order to induce men to exile themselves to the other side of the world, the Company's servants were allowed to engage in private trade, under certain paper restrictions. They might do local business, or business with England in things of inferior value. The goods which returned the best profits were to be handled by the Company alone. What came of this egregious arrangement might have been foreseen by the intellect of a moderate-sized rabbit. Men who might find themselves discarded

at the end of their term, or called home before it was over if their employers grew dissatisfied with them, evaded the restrictions. They were on the spot, and were sure of the tacit approval or active aid of their colleagues. The Company could not help knowing that this was the case. Therefore endless lamentations and angry scoldings run through the minutes of the council, and correspondence with the servants in the East. Nothing is more common, or more grotesque, than the contrast between the profuse assurances of the Company that it has every confidence in the virtue of Mr A. who is just appointed to this or that factory, and its furious rebuke of his scandalous dishonesty written perhaps within a year and a day.

Another folly of the Company was its obstinacy in refusing to allow its servants to take wives out to India. They would, it seems, be more likely to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the interest of their employers if they were not led into selfishness by the corrupting presence of a wife and babies. The rulers of the Company were able men, but they contributed their share to the follies of the wise. It was the most natural thing in the world that every one of its factories was surrounded before long by a ring of native substitutes for English wives and a swarm of Eurasian children. This mistake was corrected sooner than the error of giving bad pay—no doubt for the sufficient reason that to allow a factor to bring out a white wife cost less than to increase his salary. These illicit unions provided useful go-betweens in the private trade. Nor were the factors in the East the only sinners in this kind. The captains, officers, and men of the Company's ships had their fingers also in the same forbidden pie. They brought home their private ventures in defiance of

the regulations, and smuggled them ashore, by the help of associates who met them as they entered the Channel, or through bumboats when in the Downs, and even at Blackwall.

The Company, in short, had to suffer from the troubles which agitated the whole nation, and from the defects of human nature. But it won through the first, and bore the second without breaking down, by virtue of its own intrinsic energy. Or it would be more accurate to say because of the expansive force of the people from which it came, and because it proved itself to be best qualified to represent that people in the vast region east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of Cape Horn. A very convenient, and also convincing, way of showing how triumphantly the Merchants of London had forced, or manœuvred, their way through all obstacles is to take their establishments as they were in 1617, when the first joint stock was wound up, and compare them with the list of posts of all kinds transferred from the London to the United Company in 1709.

At the earlier date some hundred and fifty Englishmen were scattered from Surat to Firado in a score or so of factories. It is not easy to fix the number of these posts at more than one particular moment. Some were experimental and proved not worth keeping, some were reluctantly given up. From some the English were excluded by force. Firado brought nothing but loss, and was given up. We were excluded from Japan, and despite several attempts to make an entry, remained shut out till the country was thrown open in the nineteenth century—for about two hundred and forty years. The Dutch in the end drove us from Bantam, which for a time was the Company's headquarters. We had gone from the old Jacatra, the new



Batavia, even sooner. Other posts in the Indian Archipelago were lost or became worthless as a consequence of the disaster of 1619 and 1620. Such places as Patani in the Gulf of Siam, once a meeting-place for trade with China, withered after Coen founded Batavia, and made it safer and more profitable for the junks to come to that roadstead. Succadana and Benjarmassin in Borneo never were worth much. You cannot found a big trade on diamonds and bezoar stones, even if your factors do not display ignorance, and the natives are not treacherous. Our most valuable station, and the one which had most of the future in it, was at Surat. And that was well worth cherishing. It was not that we found a good market for our own produce there. English cloths had but a small sale—or as good as none except as trapping for elephants. Nor was much bought there for carriage to England, unless it was the indigo purchased for silver by the factors in Ahmadabad, Barrompore, or Ajmeer. Still, Surat was the gateway to the dominions of the Great Mogul; and Guzerat provided the fabrics we transported to the more remote East, and to Persia. The greater safety of transport in the Company's ships (there were 36 in all, from 100 to 1000 tons, at one time in the whole trade) tempted native merchants to load goods in them. And already these native merchants of Surat were beginning to employ English skippers, boatswains, and gunners. By the end of 1621 the Company had sent out 86 ships on successive voyages. Of these 36 had returned with cargoes, 9 had been lost, 5 had been worn out in the port-to-port trade, 11 had been taken by the Dutch, and 25 were out in the East or were coming home. The Company had taken out English goods to the value at home of £319,211, and had brought Indian cargoes valued at £2,004,600 in

Europe—whereby it had more than replaced the £613,681 of bullion it had exported.

In 1709 it had more than doubled the number of its stations since 1617. But the mere increase in number was of very minor importance to the change in character. At the earlier date the factories were at the best tolerated adventures. In 1709 several of them were strong possessions. The Company held St Helena, taken from the Dutch—a priceless house of call for homeward-bound vessels. The King had ceded Bombay, which replaced Surat as headquarters on the west coast. As the Company had drained the swamps and had thereby rendered the island far less unhealthy; as moreover it gave much more security and far better treatment to all, of whatever colour, living under its protection than did sultans and rajahs, a great native city was springing up beside the English factory. We need not quote this fact as proof of our wholly exceptional virtue. Exactly the same thing happened with the French at Pondicherry, and the Dutch in Batavia. The European has been trained at home to go by rule and law. He might be a hard master, but his native subjects knew what they were expected to do. They knew that if they toed the line they would benefit by a far greater measure of security than they could hope for in a native State. But by far the most important addition to the Company's holdings was Madras. It was a known but not considerable town on the coast when, in November 1643, in the darkest hours of the Company's history, leave was given to it to build a fort, and hold the place on favourable terms, by a local rajah, Sri Ranga Ry or Raja. The peculiar merit of Madras was that it lay beyond the reach of the stronger Indian States, among

small coast rajahs, who were individually feeble and much divided by rivalries. Here, therefore, it was that the Company could first found a territorial power, could extend to Bengal, and push our trade as far east as China, where the expanding energy of England coincided with the decline of the Netherlands. It was from Madras and the Carnatic, improperly so called by us, that about the middle of the eighteenth century the conquest of India began. Of that great story nothing is to be said here. As it conquered, the Company rapidly became a part of the national government, and rightly so, since no body of subjects can conquer for themselves, but only for the State to which they belong.

The last years of the Company's history, before it had to choose between destruction and playing the conqueror, were the most prosperous of all, in so far as its original purpose, the trade of merchandise, was served. It set out to conquer because it was forced so to do, not because it wished. If Aurungzeb could have achieved his ambition, which was to master everything from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and keep all when won for his Empire, the Company would have been well satisfied. He had once chastised it smartly when it unwisely gave him offence, but it accepted the lesson, and the two were getting on fairly well when he died. Then the Company went on prospering till a third party intervened. Who he was, and why he did it, and with what consequences to him and to us, will have to be briefly recorded in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DUTCH WEST INDIA COMPANY

THERE was a time when it was accurate and even usual to say not Brazil, but the Brazils. The plural was in place for there were two—the Portuguese and the Dutch. During many years of the seventeenth century a large part of the north of the country was in the hands of the Dutch West India Chartered Company. For a space, a rather big one, there appeared to be a probability that this younger sister of the more famous East India “Maatschapij” might grow to be the greater by virtue of a vast and easily expanded territorial dominion. How it won the considerable measure of success it did actually attain, and why it finally failed, make a curious story, and withal an instructive one.

There are two propositions which nearly all of us have heard. One is that the old Spanish and Portuguese colonial governments were bad and oppressive. The other is that the possession of “sea power” always gives the victory. Now Spain and Portugal in their best times had comparatively little solid power on the sea. From the later years of the sixteenth century they had hardly any. Their colonial dominions in America, North and South, were of vast extent, stretching as they did from what are now the southern States of the great English-speaking republic, down to the Tierra del Fuego at the point of South America. They were immensely valuable, and were eagerly, not to



say greedily, desired by peoples whose naval strength was many degrees greater than that of Spain and Portugal. Yet these two, weak as they were, held their empires in America well into the nineteenth century, losing only parts of the fringe of islands along the mainlands, which proves that their governments were at any rate tolerable. That foreign adventurers aided the rebels after 1810, when the colonies began to fall away by taking service with them, is true, but they could have done nothing if the colonists had not been in revolt. We must not be pedantic about sea power. It is great, but it has its limits. A fleet can make it possible for an invader to come from oversea, but it cannot secure him victory when he has landed. We made that discovery in South America, at Cartagena and then in Buenos Ayres. The history of the Dutch West India Company illustrates the same truth on a far larger scale, and also a more interesting way.

The seamen and traders of the Netherlands had been busy all along the east coast of South America from early in the sixteenth century. They smuggled with the creoles, or traded with the native tribes. On the whole, they gained profits which encouraged them to continue. From time to time they came to grief, were taken prisoners by Spaniards or Portuguese who might hang them as pirates, or parties of them fell into the hands of hostile savages whose regular practice was to kill, cook, and eat their captives. The Portuguese settlements and forts were few and far between. Long stretches of coast were inhabited solely by Indians, as is, indeed, the case to-day. In the course of these visits during half a century or so the Netherlanders had acquired an accurate knowledge of the sea-coast, and as some of them remained to trade, or to work as artisans among the

settlers, they could not fail to be more or less acquainted with the interior as far as the Portuguese themselves knew it, which would be along the banks of the rivers. That white settlers were few; that they were in a chronic state of war with many of the Indian tribes who might easily be converted into useful allies by an invader—these were to them familiar facts. And there was a third of immense importance.

Brazil from the beginning had been a refuge for the "New Christians" or "Conversos" or "Maranos"—three names for the considerable part of the inhabitants of Portugal who were by race Jews. They had been driven by persecution to pretend to be Christians, but their sincerity was much doubted. They were regarded with hatred by the old Christians, avowedly on religious grounds, but quite as much out of spite and envy. The business capacity, industry, and the skill in manipulating money, of the Jews, won prosperity for them, and they were not always wise enough to abstain from an ostentatious display of their wealth. The Inquisition watched them incessantly, and it acted on anonymous accusations. A malignant private enemy, or disappointed competitor in trade, had only to send an anonymous letter asserting that a New Christian, man or woman, was in the habit of putting on clean linen on a Saturday, or did not eat bacon, in order to set the Inquisition in motion. And it was all the more zealous if the accused were known to possess means. Imprisonment, the order to confess anything they knew which would tell against them, the rack, and horrible public flagellations then followed in regular order. If the suspects were not burnt, the reason was that the property of obstinate Judaisers, who were handed over to the secular arm for execution, was confis-

cated by the State. In the case of lesser punishments it was taken by the Inquisition.

It followed as the night the day that the New Christians, who were Jews by religion in their hearts, escaped when they could. Some fled to the Netherlands, where they were safe, and free. A large number found a refuge in Brazil, where the colonists were opposed to the establishment of the Inquisition. After what has been said of the constant visits of Netherlanders and their frequent intercourse with the creoles, it will be easily understood that these two fragments of the persecuted race and religion found means to communicate with one another. So it was well known in Amsterdam, or in any port of Holland and Zeeland, that there was one element in the population of Brazil which would welcome a Dutch conquest. It did; and when secure under the rule of the invaders, the pretending Christians threw off the hypocrisy imposed on them by terror, and openly avowed their real creed. When Dutch rule had passed away, a good many of them fled to the protection of the English in Jamaica or to Dutch Guiana.

The enterprising Netherlanders had therefore good reason to feel confident that a conquest of part of Brazil would present no very serious difficulty. The whole was more than they could prudently undertake to occupy at once. One region drew them with a special attraction, namely, the north-east shoulder of South America, around and behind Pernambuco. The aim of the West India was very different from that of the East India Company. South America offered no numerous population settled and fit to be called civilised, as did Asia. There were the creoles and there were savage tribes, and that was all. Therefore, whoever wished to win the riches of South America must

cultivate them, and he must work them with slave labour. The Dutch had been so busy in smuggling blacks from Africa into Brazil that they were under no illusion on that point. Therefore the plan they laid was a far-ranging one. The west of Africa must be worked in correspondence with the east of South America, and the Portuguese must be driven from both. Slaves must be procured in Western Africa, and carried to the opposite coast of South America, there to be set to work in raising colonial produce which Dutch ships would then carry to European markets. This was the comprehensive and far-ranging ambition of the promoters of the West India Company. They had another which they thought of carrying out when the needful preliminaries had been executed. This was no less than to make their first acquisitions in Brazil a basis of operations, or taking-off place, for a conquest of Peru, which in the early seventeenth century meant all Spain held in South America. The King of Spain drew the treasure he used to vex his neighbours with from Peruvian mines. If they were taken from him, all his greatness would collapse, and the United Netherlands would stand where he had been. It was a soaring and gorgeous dream of ambition.

The belief that all this might, and therefore ought to be, done had been in the minds of certain Netherlanders for years. It had become almost a fixed idea with one notable refugee from the Southern Netherlands of the name of Usselincx—a man who held no political office himself, but greatly influenced those who did. The signing of the truce in 1609 had stopped all schemes of that kind. But when the war was renewed in 1621, hopes and ambitions immediately became solid, and took shape in action. The Company was formed by eager private adventurers, who aimed much



less at trade than at winning booty, and who well knew that in this case conquest of territory must go before development of commerce. The letters patent which turned the voluntary association of speculators into a legal person with rights and powers were issued by the States General on 3rd June 1621. The organisation of the new Company was carefully copied from the existing East India Company.

At the head was a governing body of nineteen Bewindhebbers, commonly spoken of as The XIX. It was divided, on the model of the East India Company, into five "chambers"—Amsterdam, Zeeland, the Meuse (Rotterdam), the North (Hoorn and Friesland), and Groningen. The joint stock was fixed at 7,108,161 florins, or say, £580,000 in round figures, and the shares were put at 6000 florins, but, so confident were they in the Netherlands, that the amount subscribed was 18,000,000 florins—£1,500,000. Each chamber had its own vessels and board, and traded independently with that part of the capital contributed by itself. The States General lent warships and soldiers on condition that the Company paid for them, and of course it took its proportion of prize money and profits. To help the Company to get well launched, the States gave it a yearly subvention of 200,000 florins for five years. Balance-sheets were to be published every five years, and no dividends paid till a 10 per cent. profit had been made, and then they were to come out of the excess.

The dream was magnificent, but it was only a dream. From 1623 to 1661 the Company was trying to turn its own imaginings into realities. It was forced to recognise that it had undertaken a task which was far beyond its strength, and also that there were powerful nations in Europe which would not allow even the United Netherlands themselves,

far less a chartered company, to take possession of all West Africa and all South America. In the end England and France intervened, but even before they struck in, the national resistance of the Brazilians had been too much for the Company. The story of the Company's forty years or so of effort divides naturally into three sections. The first shows what the greatly superior sea power of the Netherlanders allowed them to do. The second makes clear what was the limit of their strength. The third brings out the working of those national rivalries which stimulate the strong to protect the weak—in their own interest.

The Company began by delivering what to a hasty observer might well look like a killing blow to the Portuguese dominion in Brazil. In December 1623 a powerful fleet, which carried a landing force of soldiers, largely foreign mercenaries, German, French, and English, sailed for South America. The commandership-in-chief of the combined armament was given to Jacob Willekens, a well-known and proved man. Piet Hein was the naval second in command, and Hans Vindort or Van Dorth was the military chief. The aim was the capture of Bahia, the Portuguese capital till Rio was preferred to it in the early nineteenth century. The place was taken with scandalous ease. The Spanish-Portuguese Government, which had not renewed the twelve years' truce with the Netherlands signed in 1609, and had also plunged into the Thirty Years War in Germany, was distracted among the many calls on its attention. It was also growing daily more incapable. An armament such as Willekens led to Brazil could not be prepared in secret. The Government in Madrid was warned early of what was coming. Nothing was done, and when the Dutch stood into the bay, the authorities and all

the inhabitants who had means fled to their fazendas, *i.e.* sugar plantations, and the forest. The only show of defence was made by the son of the Governor, to all seeming a flighty young gentleman, who squared up single handed, and defied the invaders with dagger and rapier. It is to the credit of the Dutch that they were content to send him a prisoner into one of their ships. But no more can be said in praise of their conduct. The mob of mercenaries of various nationalities who made up their army plundered Bahia outrageously, not sparing even the New Christians, who were notoriously favourable to them.

Willekens was quickly persuaded that the conquest was made, and that nothing was left for him to do but to leave Vindort in command at Bahia, and go back home with eleven of his ships and the portable property he had seized. Hein was despatched to Angola to take Portuguese forts and collect negro slaves. They all acted as if they could safely assume that the victory was won, and nothing remained to do but to reap the fruits.

The surprising truth was that their difficulties were only beginning. The Iberian peoples are not pusillanimous. When the refugees from Bahia found themselves in the bush and the forest they rallied. And they were reinforced from the interior. Dom Marcos de Teixeira, the Bishop, who had taken the field with the others, was indefatigable in exhorting all to play the man for the true religion and their country. He found good response. The right things were done. The wretched Governor, who had set an example of cowardice, was a prisoner. A substitute had to be found, and after death had removed one, and others proved not to be available, they all with one consent implored the Bishop to take command. Dom Marcos was

old, and he was infirm. He was, too, a priest in character as well as profession. A bishop should be no striker, and the clergy ought not to be concerned in matters of blood. He hesitated, and consented only after searchings of heart. But he did consent—on the ground, no doubt, that this was a case of war with unbelievers. The choice was true to type and tradition. Spaniards and Portuguese had often seen their bishops and abbots riding well ahead in battles with the Moors.

Dom Marcos revealed a real talent for guerilla fighting. The country round Bahia was stripped of food. Good watch was kept, and the Dutch foraging parties were attacked and ambushed. In one of these affairs Vindort was slain in single combat by Dom Francisco de Padilla. Very soon the garrison was hemmed in at Bahia. Provisions began to run short. The undisciplined foreign soldiers of fortune grew mutinous, all the more because Schoutens—Vindort's successor—proved incapable. The only hope left to the invaders was that a fleet from home would turn up soon. But it was a Spanish-Portuguese fleet, under command of Fadrique de Toledo, bringing a strong force of soldiers which came. The Government of King Philip IV was stirred to activity, and there was a rally of patriotism in Portugal. Rich nobles contributed money, and volunteers came forward manfully. Schoutens and his garrison were not capable of making an obstinate defence against attack from sea and land, or bearing up against hunger within the walls. They surrendered rather tamely. Don Fadrique had the good sense to grant easy terms. The great thing was to get back the town, and that he did. A Dutch relieving fleet came under Baldwin Henrik the day after Platea, and Bahia remained in the hands of the Portuguese for good.



The Company's first venture had failed, and that in a way which showed the difficulties they must overcome before their ambition could be satisfied. It was plain that the Portuguese could, and would fight. It was no less clearly proved that the clergy, by far the strongest influence in a Portuguese or Spanish colony, would do their utmost to promote vigorous resistance, even to the point of playing the servant of the Lord with "the crucifix" and the sword. The coast of Brazil is hundreds of miles long and could not be everywhere watched by any force the West India Company could provide for blockading purposes. Therefore it must be as good as impossible to prevent communications with the mother-country, or even to stop all Portuguese trade. On the other hand, there was enough in what had happened to encourage the Company not to despair of winning success later on. It could not but be known in the Netherlands that Fadrique de Toledo's fleet had been ill appointed. It lost many ships by foundering on the way home, and those which escaped reached port in a very shattered condition. The naval superiority of the Dutch was manifest. Their squadrons could raid the Brazilian coast with little risk of meeting an efficient enemy at sea. Cornelis Jol, known to the Spaniards as Pie de Palo (*i.e.* Timbertoe, for he had a wooden leg), did, and in 1627 so did Piet Hein.

This hero, who was indeed a right stout-hearted man, and bred from boyhood to the sea, was privileged to give a stirring example of the mobility and wide reach of a good fleet well handled. In 1627 he first swept the north-east coast of Brazil, landing, raiding, and capturing ships. As the year drew on towards the time when the Spanish galleons would be homeward bound with the treasure from the

mines of Guanajuato and Potosi, he sailed for the West Indies. On the coast of Cuba he made an enormously rich capture. The corruption and the loss of spirit which were rotting Spain had been particularly bad in that fleet. The worst offenders afterwards lost their heads in Seville. But if Piet Hein had not shown judgment and vigour, and his squadron had not been in good trim, he could not have availed himself of the bad quality of his enemy. As it was, he came back with fourteen millions of florins of booty, to be poured into the strong box of the West India Company. A great reception awaited him, for never had such a prize been brought home since Holland was Holland. Triumphal arches, bands, salutes, fountains running wine, choruses of comely young women in fancy costumes, and schoolmasters who read laudatory Latin orations to him, were forthcoming in profusion. It was observed that Piet, who did not know a word of the learned language, took it all without the least display of emotion. He only chewed his quid. Even a tremendous bouquet left him unmoved. When a burgomaster pointed out to him that his admiring countrymen were doing him great honour, he growled: "Bah! They're making a fuss now because I've brought 'em home a hatful of money. I've been in greater danger for them twenty times before, and they would not have cared if my head had been taken off by a cannon-ball." So goes the story, and it squares well with what is otherwise known of that true "son of Boreas." The servants of the Dutch Company had little enough reason to consider themselves properly rewarded for their labours, or to be grateful for mere cupboard love.

The great haul of treasure was an event of much consequence. It not only crippled the Spanish Government

by depriving it of necessary revenue, but it provided the Company with the means of winning more. Preparations were begun at once to send another and a stronger fleet to Brazil, with an expeditionary force capable of taking and holding a position on the coast. The goal of the voyage this time was to be, not Bahia, but Pernambuco, or, as it was commonly called, Recife (the Reef). The name Pernambuco may be used for short, to mean the combination of the rocky peninsula Olinde (the Pretty) which juts out just above Recife, then for that place which stands on the beach opposite an opening in the great reef which runs along the coast, and also for the winding river from which the province and town take their name. Olinde being rocky and dry, and swept by sea breezes, is healthy. There is good anchorage inside the reef on which the Atlantic rollers break, and throw up the screen of foam which half conceals the town of Recife from onlookers on ships outside. A better choice for the headquarters of a Dutch dominion could not have been found. The place can be reached by a straight and easy voyage from Europe, it was not difficult to defend, and it was the door opening on to the best developed and richest part of the Portuguese possessions.

The conduct of the contending parties was characteristic of both. While the Dutch were working hard to revenge their failure at Bahia, the Portuguese had fallen back into over-confidence and sloth. The news of the great preparations in the Northern Netherlands could not fail to reach the King of Spain's officials at Brussels, who reported to Madrid. Warning was sent out from Lisbon. It was sent on to Pernambuco, and treated with neglect. When, therefore, a powerful fleet under Henrik Lonck,

carrying 7000 soldiers commanded by a General Veerdenburch, hove in sight, no preparations had been made to resist them. It was the story of Bahia over again minus Marcos de Teixera and the relieving fleet of Fadrique de Toledo. This time, too, the Dutch knew better than to leave the work half-done. On this occasion also the Portuguese rallied, and turned on the invaders. But the Dutch were too strong to be hemmed in. Moreover, they were better received than at Bahia. The New Christians were numerous, there was bitter discontent with the Portuguese rule, and in particular with the abominably corrupt administration of justice. Some Indian tribes joined the Dutch. One mulatto of the name of Domingo Fernandes Calabar came over to them and did them valuable service, till he fell into the hands of the Portuguese, and was put to death. A good many creoles who were not Conversos resigned themselves to submit to Dutch rule. Others who tried to take refuge in regions beyond the reach of the Dutch were so brutally plundered by their own countrymen that they came back. The more patriotic Portuguese did make a stand for a time in an entrenched camp which they named Bom Jesu. Their task was made all the harder for them because they were attacked by the maroons who haunted the "Palmares"—the palm forest of the interior. The maroons were runaway negroes. Blacks born and bred in slavery are timid, but these slaves had been kidnapped in Africa and were, after their fashion, warriors. In a tropical country very congenial to them, and in a forest country which supplied them not only with cover, but with game and vegetable food, they were quite at home, and of course they raided on their old masters. The blacks had little enough cause to expect good treatment from the Dutch, who were



confessedly brutal to their slaves, but for the moment the enemy was the Portuguese.

With these conditions in their favour, the servants of the West India Company were able to extend their power over six "captaincies" or provinces lying on either side of and behind Pernambuco. The great and flourishing time of their adventure lay in the years between 1637 and 1644, when they were governed by John Maurice, Count of Nassau Siegen. He was a vigorous soldier, an able administrator, a man of liberal disposition who adopted a policy of full toleration of the Roman Catholic Portuguese.

War did not cease—a guerilla war of ambushes, surprises, marches, captures and recaptures, which has no coherent history. But the Dutch gained ground steadily. Sugar plantations were worked with profit, and the "tithes" paid by the tenants yielded the Company a revenue of 280,000 florins. The forests were worked for timber. On the other side of the Atlantic the Company drove the Portuguese from post after post, even from their oldest and best station, San Jorge da Mina. Fleets sent out from Spain appeared on the coast, and fought actions which had no permanent result. Slaves came in from Africa. Even the great scheme for an attack on Peru was put into execution. Henrik Brouwer took a fleet round Staten Island and the Horn into the Pacific in 1642. It failed to shake the Spanish Viceroyalty, and Brouwer died. But the superiority of the Dutch at sea was demonstrated once more. In 1640 Portugal separated from Spain, and was glad to be able to make a ten years' truce with the Dutch Company. When the Count of Nassau went home in 1644, there seemed to be a certainty that the Company had taken hold for ever of the magnificent dominion in the tropics. As a dependency

on, or consequence of, the main conquest on the mainland in Brazil, the Dutch held the island of Curaçao on the north coast of South America, and had planted themselves on the "wild coast" of Guiana, with sporadic excursions up the Amazon and Orinoco. In 1644 the settlements of the English and French in the New World, whether on the mainland or islands, looked but poor things beside the opulent Dutch conquest.

The downfall was more rapid than the rise. In the very year after the Count of Nassau came home and could make a stately report of his government began the series of events which ended in the bankruptcy of the Company and its expulsion from Brazil, though not from Curaçao and Guiana. In truth, there was more brilliant show than genuine substance in its prosperity. Already in 1637, and on the advice of Nassau, it had consented, or had been forced to consent, to renounce its monopoly, and to throw the trade open. It turned itself into a "regulated company" by allowing anyone who would sail under its authority to trade on his own account to Brazil. By itself this surrender of the monopoly might have done good rather than harm to the Dutch rule, but there were causes of another and a more injurious character at work to bring ruin.

One and not the least effective of them was the persistent hostility of the Portuguese, not only outside the Dutch border, but inside too. If the tolerant policy of Nassau had been fully carried out, better government and a share in the prosperity brought by Dutch business enterprise might have won over the Roman Catholic residents. It was a poor chance, yet there was a chance. But the West India Company suffered from a pest which never troubled

the East India. High-flying Calvinist divines came out, and, as their manner was, they tried to enforce what was law in the United Netherlands—that is to say, to suppress all public celebration of the “idolatrous Mass.” They were not allowed to have their way, but were able to stop all religious processions, and of course they bitterly offended the Roman Catholics. Many Jews came over from the Netherlands, and, encouraged by them, the Conversos threw off their pretence of Christianity and Judaised with ostentation. This was not pleasing to the Dutch, and was the abomination of desolation to the Portuguese. So ill-feeling was bred.

Meanwhile economic causes arising from the constant war with the old masters of the land were at work to undermine the colony. They forced the Company to maintain a garrison at a great cost, and therefore consumed profits. When the truce was made with the Portuguese in 1642, the Company would fain have reduced the 6000 soldiers it employed to an even more modest figure. Nassau made the directors understand that the 6000 were hardly enough, and that if the garrisons were reduced, there would soon be an end to their tenure in Brazil. The truce was as ill-observed by both sides in the West as the earlier suspension of arms in 1609 had been in the East. It came to this that no soldiers would mean no colony, and a sufficient number of soldiers would mean no profits.

Fixed as they were in this cleft stick, the directors at home, and their representatives in the colony, grew savage. The alleged fault of the Dutch, which, as we know, is “giving too little and asking too much,” grew extremely visible when the choice for them was between squeezing money out of their subjects, or coming to ruin. They became, not

wholly without cause, intensely suspicious of the Portuguese Brazilians within their borders. They suspected, they accused, they arrested, and they used torture—to which they were, indeed, horribly addicted. Out of it all came the revolt headed by João Fernandes Vieira, the William Tell or William Wallace of Brazilian history.

This national hero was not, and could not well be, a mediæval champion in shining armour clad. It was not his part to head forlorn hopes and lead charges, but to organise and direct, and, above all, to keep a motley following of Portuguese, of half-breeds, of negroes and Indians working steadily to one end. There was no doubt of his courage. He showed it by keeping full control of his nerves and his wits for years in the midst of dangers which many brave men would find more trying than the risk of getting in the way of a bullet. Vieira was by birth a native of Funchal in Madeira. He came to Brazil as a lad to seek his fortune with his intelligence and his industry. He had fought against the Dutch, and had been wounded when the camp at Bom Jesu was taken by them. But like many others, he submitted to their rule, and prospered under it greatly. In 1645 he was not only the lessee of a sugar plantation, but the owner of cattle stations. He gained the confidence of the Dutch by his probity, and their respect by a certain rather grim politeness for which he was noted. On one occasion he boasted, and not idly, that they would be more ready to believe a lie told by him than the truth told by another Brazilian. Indeed he did illustrate the wisdom of Bacon's maxim that a general habit of honesty has this among other advantages, that it enables a man to make an effective use of falsehood when it is necessary. His generosity and fair dealing had made him highly popular with his



countrymen. He had won the devotion of his numerous slaves by kindness and firm management. The negro can be trained to a perfect loyalty to a good white master. Add to this that he was a vehement, even a fanatical, Roman Catholic. A more dangerous man to a foreign heretical rule there could not have been.

Nobody can believe that Vieira was ever in heart true to the Dutch. For years before 1645, alone by himself, for he held the truly Iberian conviction that what is known to two is no longer a secret, he had been preparing for "the day." As he was the patron of various religious confraternities which celebrate their pious feasts by shows of fireworks, he obtained leave to bring in gunpowder. Of course, he imported a vast deal more than was needed for the manufacture of squibs, and put it in safe places. He smuggled and hid arms. When Nassau left for home, and was succeeded by far weaker men, Vieira saw that the time was at hand. Under one pretext or another he moved the cattle on his estancias to the hills in the interior. So much activity was bound to arouse suspicion here and there. Envious countrymen, or Dutch partisans, began to suspect him, and the authorities were warned. Vieira was vigilant, and had a trusty friend or two in Pernambuco who watched for him. He would not risk going into the town, but moved from place to place, guarded by his devoted blacks, who did sentry work in hidden look-outs. During all this time he was offering to contract for the Dutch Council, and bore himself with an appearance of respectful loyalty to them. No Jesuit had anything to teach him concerning the direction of the intentions, and the value of an economy of truth. At length the time came when evasion would no longer be enough. Then he opened himself to others, having no

scruple in so good a cause in trapping those on whose courage he could not fully rely, into compromising positions where it was safer for them to follow him than to remain within reach of the Dutch. It is recorded, and we can well believe the report, that when the moment was come when he must speak out, he had a terrible spasm of, not fear, but of searching of heart. He had a right to bring ruin on himself, but could he honourably or piously lead others into what might be a disastrous venture? Then he shut himself in his oratory, and prostrate before the altar prayed vehemently for assurance. The ardour of his appeal brought its own answer—no sign, no miracle, but inward and spiritual confidence. Vieira rose serene, and went out to put his hand to the plough, and persevere henceforth without shadow of turning. He had, in fact, sought the Lord as did his contemporaries the English Puritans. The dupes of their own cleverness who believe that they canted and were hypocrites may believe the same of Vieira.

Now this man, with a fire of religious enthusiasm in his heart, and a singularly astute head on his shoulders, began the war which ended by the liberation of Brazil. I cannot say that it was either heroic or very interesting. Vieira's chief difficulty was to keep his miscellaneous host together. The small bodies of troops sent to him by Portuguese officials in the south were of moderate value. Some of his friends were shaking in their shoes. His other followers, apart from his negro guard who were devoted to him, were unstable. Like the Highlanders who fought with Montrose, or the Vendéens of the French revolutionary wars, they were addicted to going off home after a victory as much as after a defeat. Their mobility served them in one way: when defeated by the Dutch regulars, as they sometimes were,

they scattered in the forest, and found their way by paths, of which the enemy knew nothing, to the rallying place. They could surprise detachments and make a good resistance in the bush, the cane brake, and the swamp. But to fight a regular battle in which manœuvres in the open were required was beyond their power. We ought to know the character of the conflict well enough, seeing that we fought such a kind of war in South Africa not so many years ago. It was a prolonged tussle between regulars who needed lines of communication, bases of operation, and constant supplies on the one side, and on the other a swarm of partisans to whom the whole land was a basis of operations, and who could live on roots and game in a very thinly populated and thickly wooded country.

A regular army can win in a struggle of this nature if two conditions are fulfilled. It must have time enough, and it must be sufficiently numerous. The Dutch, of course, had all the time there was, but they never had nearly enough men. They were bound to tie a large proportion of them to garrison work in Pernambuco and a few other vital points. Tropical diseases carried off many, and hunger was a terrible enemy. The Indian tribes who acted with them out of hatred of the Portuguese, or of rivals of their own race, were unstable. They would go off to their hunting-grounds whenever they were tired, or even change sides when they were tempted or offended.

Under Vieira's stern commands the inhabitants of villages hid in the forests when a Dutch column came near them, after burning all they could not carry away. Plantations which belonged even to Brazilians who were in the field with the patriots were burnt, lest the Dutch should make use of them. A single man with a flint and steel can set

a sugar harvest blazing in a minute. After some months of this kind of war the Company's officials and garrisons were reduced to rely for food on what was brought them by sea. Pernambuco would have been starved into surrender long before it actually fell in 1654 if it had not been timely relieved by a fleet. The sea power could easily do that, but its reach stopped at high-water mark. Vieira was making the country inland perfectly useless to his enemies. Before it gave up the fight, the Company had to rely on the help of the States General in order to be able to send out ships, which only prolonged the agony.

Meanwhile a new force had come into the struggle. The appearance of a strong English fleet sent to the West Indies to subdue the Royalist, or nominally Royalist colonies, marks the beginning of a vast change. The State was stretching out its hand to take firm hold of lands won by chartered companies, or by "proprietary" founders of colonies. Their day was as good as over in America except on the remote and hard shore of Hudson's Bay. Then came the first war between England and the Netherlands in 1652-53. It had the most disastrous influence on the fortunes of the Dutch West India Company. When the fleets of the Republic were driven into port, and its trade suspended, what help could be sent to the steadily diminishing handfuls of its officials and soldiers in South America? The decline, already well marked, now went at headlong speed. Nothing but the weakness of Portugal saved it from expulsion at once.

In a few years the pressure not only of England but of France was openly applied to compel the Dutch to withdraw from Brazil. Charles II's marriage to a Portuguese princess ranged him decisively against the Dutch. And he was



sure of popular support in England in case he took strong measures against them, even to the extent of making war. And now that the confused times of the Fronde were over, and the youthful Louis XIV was master, and an adored master also, France came forward to assert its right to have a say in deciding the fate of the New World. Louis, too, detested the Dutch. Therefore England and France alike were prepared to help Portugal. It was far beyond the power of the Republic, even if it had wished to help the Company, to meet them both by war if they did act strenuously together. When they did combine to attack it in 1672 it owed its escape from destruction to their dissensions—to English fear of French predominance. Now and henceforth the conflict in America was between nations struggling with one another for empire. The Dutch West India Company had failed to carry out its schemes of vaulting ambition. In 1661 it was brought to make a formal renunciation of its claims to Brazil. It was glad to receive promises from Portugal of payment for forts and stores it left behind. A species of ghost of the great Company lingered on in Curaçao and Guiana—which to be sure were themselves substantial realities. The moral of its story ought perhaps to be stated though it is sufficiently obvious. The Company, relying on such support as it could hope for from shareholders who looked to receive dividends, and on prize money, set out to do what could have been done only by a strong government which was prepared, and was free to employ its resources to the utmost. It failed, and even if it had found an unbroken succession of governors-general as able as the Count of Nassau, it could not have succeeded.

Indeed the Dutch West India, like the East India, Company was ill-qualified, and not at all disposed, to found a real

colony. Both thought only of their balance-sheets and of their temporary interests, and even of them in a rather cheese-paring spirit. The Dutch East India Company aimed with stolid obstinacy at confining its Cape Colony to the narrow limits of such agriculture and trade as would just supply the outward- and homeward-bound Indiamen. Between 1642, when Table Bay was occupied, and 1796, when the British Government first took possession, there were 154 years. In the course of that long period, the Company having not only the population of the United Netherlands, but all Protestant Germany and the French Huguenots to draw on, could well have formed a colony of a million inhabitants. A population of that size could never have been taken possession of by the small force landed in 1796, and the British Government could not have spared the substantial army which would have been needed.

The West India Company disposed of very inferior resources and it scattered itself a great deal too much. Still, it could have done better with New Amsterdam than it did. As the really interesting part of the history of this once Dutch settlement—known to all the world now as New York—belongs to a time when the Company was a mere memory, no more need be said of its fortunes.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FRENCH COMPANIES AND OTHERS

It may appear to some readers that a lack of respect is shown to a great people when the chartered companies formed by the Government of France are treated as of less importance than the English and Dutch, and when they are classed with others of an undeniably subordinate order. But the fact is that the French companies cannot be put on the same level as ours or those of the United Netherlands, if they are to be judged, as they ought in all sound criticism to be, not by the grandeur of the State they came from, but by what they achieved and left behind them.

There were many of them. M. Bonnassieux, in his *Grandes Compagnies de Commerce*, arranges them under nineteen heads: four for Europe and the Levant; three for Africa; two for Asia; ten for America. Here surely is proof of a world-wide activity, if you look only at the number of the companies. But if you go further, and examine into what they did, and what came of them, then certain facts force themselves on the attention of all who square their opinions to realities, and refuse to be governed by sentiment, patriotic or any other.

The companies were without exception fragile, and either short-lived or subject to incessant changes. Speedy failure, dissolution, union quickly followed by disunion, destruction, reconstruction, and, at the end, suppression by the State

which had framed them, are the stages in the history of the great majority—indeed of all. It would be monstrous to account for the lack of success by a supposed incapacity of the French to equal Englishmen or Netherlanders. The French can do anything which can be performed by intelligence and industry when they have a sufficient motive and are allowed a just opportunity. But when the motive is examined into in this connection, it is always necessary to allow proper weight to the words of one of the very able ministers of King Louis XIV, Colbert. He said that agriculture (in which he, of course, included wine-growing) and pasture were “*les deux mamelles de la France.*” There had always been trade, but the healthy part of it had existed for the service of the two staple industries. And there had been manufactures, but we may almost say as much of them. The French people, therefore, has never been forced to look to the sea and beyond it for their prosperity as have Englishmen and Netherlanders—or not to nearly the same extent. So there has not been that swarming outwards of the best and most vigorous elements of the nation, which from all antiquity has been the “causing cause” of maritime and commercial greatness.

Then, if we wish to measure the opportunity, we have first to allow that the wars of religion in the later sixteenth century (which would have torn a people of less tenacity of life, less natural powers of cohesion, and less capacity for recovery, into fragments), the troubles which came after the murder of Henri IV and those of the minority of his grandson, Louis XIV, followed one another during the very years when Englishmen and Netherlanders were enjoying the good fortune which allowed them to start early, to get there betimes, and to sit down tight in all the best places.



The French were necessarily late-comers, and then there is this: when, in the middle and later seventeenth century Frenchmen did come into the wide field of the outer world, they came at the instigation, with the help, and therefore under the control of some directing authority which had in view some object other than the promotion of trade or the foundation of a prosperous colony. So had the Puritans of New England, no doubt; but they went as a community of like-minded men and women who aimed at creating a national life. On the French side the colonists were selected with a view to their docility. Any element which was suspected of a tendency to show a will of its own was rigidly excluded. That is why the Huguenots who emigrated to America nearly always went to Virginia. The Jesuits, intent first of all on the unity of the faith, and then on the conversion of the red men, would not have allowed them into a French possession. All was regulation, conformity, humble and childlike piety—all except where a spirit of rebellion stirred individuals to take to the forest, become *coureurs de bois*, live with Indian women, and produce *bois brulés*.

The royal Government of France was always at work in the same fashion. A small example often shows the character of something made on a bigger scale than itself. The Company of the Pyrenees is a very fair sample of the whole body. It was founded to import all kinds of marine stores when Louis XIV was preparing his great attack on the Low Countries. It had its seat in the south of France, where we are not told that any industry of that kind already existed. The Company was a sham cockered by government grants, and designed to save the King from having to buy his stores at Amsterdam or Middelburg as he had hitherto done. Of course it was no use, and the minister was very

soon calling on the First President of the Law Courts at Toulouse to do all in his power to promote the interests of the Company. Even the Levant trade, which really was based on a long existing industry, came to be "encouraged" and controlled at every turn by government officials. It could not get on without "gratifications" of 6560 *livres tournois* (that money of account was then equal to 2.50 francs) for the export of 656 pieces of cloth. And, to make the story complete, it has to be noted that Government dictated how the cloth was to be manufactured. The Levant Company, of course, came to no good. How could it when men were not allowed to do what was economically profitable, and were encouraged to rely on doles for their gains? No wonder that when Colbert did consult some men of business touching the formation of a company, they told him that they had never heard of one in which the Government was concerned coming to any good, and that they asked him to let them alone. A wonder it would have been if a minister had accepted such a scandalous, not to say subversive, answer.

Out of the cloud of French companies there is one to be taken which had a long and important history—the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*. M. Bonnassieux has said that many volumes would be required to exhaust the subject. If it is necessary to repeat every detail, and also every fact over and over again, a row of volumes can be devoted to any parish pump. And the reader will be exhausted long before he is in sight of the end. The story is not so very difficult to tell, as M. Bonnassieux shows by example.

The formation of the French Company was preceded, as was the case with our own, by private ventures. In this case, as in the West Indies, France went ahead of her rivals—

a long way ahead—for French ships were in the Eastern seas by 1529, if not by 1503. The Company was not formed till 1604 in the reign of Henri IV. Its immediate origin shows what it was. The real suggester and promoter was a certain Gerard of Roy, a Fleming, who, like many others, had established himself in the Northern Netherlands. He was one of the merchants of the Republic who were hostile to the great monopolist Company. He and others after him looked to France to give him a permit or commission, which they could produce to show that they were not mere pirates. Under the cover of French authority they meant to “interlope” in the preserve of the English and Netherlanders. There were English adventurers of the time who laid exactly the same plan. The London Company had to exert itself to stop them, or to buy them off. Pepwell, who commanded in the fight with the great carrack, had been accused of joining in such a plot with one of Raleigh’s followers, and had been engaged to render him harmless. The whole thing was artificial, so much so that the ships and their tackle, together with part of their crews, were to be brought from Holland.

The history of this company, like that of others, is short. It did three things. First, it laid a plan for sending out a trading voyage—which never began to be carried out. This scheme included the employment as armed convoy of a certain Simon Danska, a notorious pirate. Second, it secured a renewal of its charter by bribery at court. It had no intention of trading itself, but it wished to be able to prevent others from going to the East unless they paid it for a licence. It was just a chartered dog in a manger. Third, it held its privileges till the term assigned it ran out. In 1642 Richelieu, the great minister of Louis XIII, promoted

another company which had the same kind of history. An expedition was sent out to Madagascar by the Marshal Mailleraye, afterwards the Duc de Mazarin. It sent out a colony to Madagascar which founded Fort Dauphin. The officers quarrelled among themselves, wrote home letters full of abuse of their chief and of one another, and fell into chronic fighting with the natives. The Fort was ceded in 1654 to the young King, Louis XIV, for 20,000 livres. At a later date it was granted to a new company, was afterwards handed back to the King, and then forgotten for many a long year. In the meanwhile private adventurers had worked on their own account in the Eastern seas with a good measure of success.

When, therefore, the Government of Louis XIV, being well settled and full of ambition to increase the greatness of France, decided to create a serious East India Company, it would appear to have had a promising course to follow. What to all seeming could have been more simple than to collect those who had been there and knew the trade, form them into a company on the now familiar model, and let them attend to their own business? A government which would have followed this plain method would not have been the Government of Louis XIV, nor would this course have seemed as much as possible to a minister animated by the rage for regulation which blazed in the great Colbert. The King meant to use the Company as an instrument for inflicting injury on the Dutch. The minister simply could not believe that mere men of business could possibly know better than such a superior being as himself. Therefore the company set up in 1664 was a mere court and government-office plaything. The King contributed largely to the stock. So did princes and princesses of the blood, and



courtiers, judges, and Government officials were told to invest—and well scolded if they did not come down handsomely. It was taken for granted that they would all receive enormous profits. Was not the Netherland Company paying 40 per cent. or so on its original shares? Was not the London Company doing very well now that the Civil War was over? True; but these Companies had made themselves, and were managed by men who knew what they were about. The French Company was “machine made,” and its administration was pestered by a swarm of courtiers who knew nothing, and were greedy for a great deal. In the mind of the King the Company was meant to conquer. The Dutch had conquered, and the English had gained a solid footing at Bombay and Madras. Why should he not do the same? Because trade, and the resources it produced, had endowed those two Companies with the power to take possession and to rule. With the French, conquest was to precede, and produce, trade. That is the whole *Iliad* in a nutshell. The French Government wanted to be at the X Y Z before it was done with the A B C.

Till 1719 this company ran through a long deplorable story of error, pretension, and bankruptcy. In 1672 an expedition was sent out to expel the Dutch from Ceylon and the Coromandel coast. The inspiring genius of the undertaking was one Caron, who had been in the service of the Dutch Company. His character was not of the best, and his verbal cleverness was greater than his sense. He did not get on well with the King's naval officers who were sent to support him. Among them they took Trincomalee—for this was the time when Louis XIV was trying to conquer the Netherlands—and were promptly turned out. They went on to the Coromandel coast and took St Thomé, and were turned out of

that. A Dutch squadron made an end of them. But one practical thing was done. A little coast rajah gave them leave to occupy and set up a factory at Pondicherry, to the south of Madras, and François Martin, who, like Caron, had been in the service of the Dutch, was planted there as President or Governor, and he made a success of the factory. It was indeed taken by the Dutch in the war improperly called of the League of Augsburg, but was restored at the peace. Martin came back, and he was followed by Dumas. As both were intelligent men, they made a fair success of the place. As for the Company, it was then and always bankrupt. Its dividends were paid out of capital, except during about two years, when they were paid out of profits made by Martin. It lived by the help of grants from the King, and by manipulations of its joint stock. In 1715 it was avowedly bankrupt, and its privileges, which expired in that year, were renewed to enable it to pay its debts, which it never did. In 1719 it was swept into the "system" of Law, which was the French equivalent to our South Sea Bubble. When the French bubble exploded, the Company came out and began a new career of its own.

The achievement it was destined to perform was to drive the rival English Company into beginning the conquest of India. That vast subject is beyond our limits. Clive's defence of Arcot, the repulse of Boscawen at Pondicherry, the taking of Madras by Mahé de la Bourdonnais, and the naval operations on the coast must be left alone, all the more because they have been told to all lengths and breadths. But we are concerned with the chartered companies, and are bound to ask, and to answer as well as we can, the questions—how the two came into collision, and why the French was smashed? The subject has been

made an excuse for floods of loose talk and extravagant supposition.

From the day that the French settled at Pondicherry, so near Madras, on what we incorrectly named the Carnatic, it became extremely probable, if not inevitable, that they would fall across one another. They had planted themselves among small, mutually hostile, and more or less barbarous coast rajahs. That they would be entangled in conflicts was certain. That they would be tempted to make use of native conflicts and native allies against one another was no less sure. The situation had existed before in the Indian Archipelago, and the result has been told already. Similar manners will naturally be produced by similar conditions, said Gibbon, and much learned trifling might be spared if historians would allow for that truth. Ordinary foresight would have taught any man that the crash would come. The when and the how would be largely influenced by the appearance of a Jan Pieterszoon Coen on one side or the other. The temptation to begin was far stronger for the French than for the English. Their Company was in normal state of financial distress, and was kept going by royal pecuniary favours. It lived on stimulants. The English Company was prosperous, and could rely with reasonable confidence on trading its rival out of India, or at any rate on keeping it in a depressed state. And since this was the case, there was always a likelihood that some French governor would sooner or later cast about for a way of defeating the English by some means other than competition in the market.

The man who was to make the attempt, and to prosper as people commonly do when they try to go beyond their strength, was François Joseph Dupleix. He came to

Pondicherry in 1641, as successor to Dumas, from the French trading-station at Chandernagor in Bengal. There had been ups and downs in his career. The Europeans of that era in the East tended to be prudently unscrupulous rather than punctiliously honest. Dupleix was cleverer than some, and not more dishonest than many. But his personal character is of small interest. His real importance is that he set to work to acquire territory and revenue by mixing in the conflicts of native princes, and that he intended to use the power he gained in this way for the purpose of making France predominant on the east side of India. Floods of praise have been poured on the supposed originality of Dupleix. They are very ill-deserved. He did nothing new when he took sides in native contests. The Portuguese had done as much, and so had the Dutch in the Archipelago. If we had not known how to do it, we would not have been at Madras. Some have credited him with having first seen the use which could be made of native soldiers, and with having first realised the superiority of European discipline over native armies. Affonso d'Albuquerque had employed native troops when he took Malacca in 1511. English and Dutch alike had made use of Japanese, Macassars and Topasses, Indians, and Portuguese half-breeds. If we had not forestalled Dupleix, the reason was partly that in the north the Mogul Empire was too strong to be attacked by the forces of any company; partly that in a general way we were doing very well, and had no need of military operations to make the profits which we aimed at. As for the superiority of European discipline, it was a commonplace that ten thousand well-disciplined soldiers could rout the biggest host the Great Mogul could collect, and it had been demonstrated by the Dutch in Java.



The most monstrous perversion of the truth is the statement, that if Dupleix had not been left in the lurch by his Company he would have conquered an empire for France in the East. The unwisely clever man was dancing in a net. France was hopelessly beaten at sea in the war of the Austrian Succession, 1742-48. Its commerce was destroyed, and its possessions in America were open to attack both on the Continent and in the West Indies. The Government of Louis XV made peace because it could not continue the war. It gave up Madras in order to regain Cape Breton on the coast of Canada, which had been taken by an expedition from New England, and by the Royal Navy. We made a very bad bargain, for a great effort was needed to recover Cape Breton in the Seven Years' War, and Madras could easily have been made useless to the French and replaced by some other post.

There is one and only one really critical judgment to be passed on Dupleix's adventure and its result. The possession of an empire in India by a European nation depended on its general power at sea. The naval superiority of Great Britain was overwhelming. We could cut the French in India off from all help from France. Therefore, whatever they ran up in the way of a territorial dominion was a "cut flower," which might spread its leaves and its perfume for a little while in its pot of water, but as it had no roots and could draw no life to itself, it was doomed to die. The English Company had prepared the way in India by judicious industry, and was solvent. It was supported from home by the naval power it had helped to create. The French Company was an artificial affair which had no real life.

All the world knows that the history of the French in India includes a great deal more than the unwise political

adventures, poor trading, and bad finance of their East India Company. But the feats of Bussy and of other daring soldiers of fortune who fought among, and for, Indian princes, are no business of ours. Nor are the labours and sufferings of their missionaries, Jesuit and others. Both were much to the honour, if not of French good sense, still beyond all peradventure, of French valour and alertness of intelligence.

Some memory, too, remains of other companies which played their part, in proportion to their strength, in the East. There was the French China Company which, when the trade had been partially opened on the Canton River, came in and tried to participate. Kings of Sweden and of Denmark, and Frederick the Great of Prussia, promoted companies which sent out their ship or two a year, and traded according to their capital and resources generally. They had rather broken careers, and it cannot be said that, if they had never come into existence, their absence would have made any difference.

There was, however, one minor and transient company—or pair of companies—which calls for at any rate mention. The Emperor, Charles VI, of the Holy Roman Empire, our old ally and favoured candidate in the war of the Spanish Succession, had been left in possession of the Southern or former Spanish Netherlands. He desired to promote the prosperity of his subjects, so he started two companies, one for the Netherlands, which was to send its vessels from Ostend, and one for Hungary, which was to sail from Trieste. Both excited the jealousy of England and of the Dutch republic. At their instigation both were in the end suppressed by the Emperor. He did not sacrifice them to avoid war. The British Government would not have

fought with the best ally it had in Europe on such a quarrel. And the Dutch republic could not have made war if it had had the wish. Charles VI threw his companies over in order to obtain the aid of the offended countries in making certain changes in the order of succession to his hereditary lands. It is obvious that the two were pawns, to be used in international politics. But they were also something else, and that other quality of theirs explains and largely justifies the anger they aroused in the Low Countries and in Great Britain—in the bosoms of the two great Companies at any rate. The plain truth concerning the Emperor's ill-fated creations was that they were interlopers. If all they had been employed to do was to compete in the East, to sell what they brought home in the Emperor's dominions; and if they had been financed by his own subjects, there was no reason why they should have aroused more hostility than did the Danish or Swedish Companies. But the capital invested in them was contributed, if not wholly, still very largely, by French and English and Dutch speculators who were already the enemies of the Companies. The cargoes they brought to European ports were meant to be smuggled into England and the Netherlands. The ships, the officers, and the crews of the Ostend Company were obtained from abroad, and there was a known interloping character in the human parts of these needful supplies. That England and the Northern Netherlands invited the smugglers by granting monopolies and imposing high dues is true. So long as the contraband trade returned large profits, men would always be found to run the risks of capture by a preventive service, and of imprisonment. It was notorious that Gothenburg in Sweden was the headquarters of a trade in contraband worked by seamen and "free traders" on the east coast of

England. And it went on till restrictions on the trade were removed, and taxes were lowered. The business of "running" goods which had not paid the King's dues was not confined to foreign interlopers and rough smugglers (and very rough and brutal they often were) on the east and south coast, or about and from the Isle of Man. There is in existence a letter written by a naval officer of the distinguished Paget family. This gentleman commanded a ship in the Channel Squadron in the Napoleonic War. He explains to his correspondent that he had bought a bag of tea from a homecoming Indiaman. It was, of course, a private venture of one of the officers—perhaps the captain. The Company allowed its officers and men a certain tonnage which they might load with their private ventures, provided they did not trade in the reserved articles, of which tea was one. But who was to enforce the reservation except the captain—and he smuggled like the rest. When Captain Paget had the tea "good cheap," seeing that it had paid neither freight nor customs, his next care was to smuggle it through Portsmouth Dockyard to Mrs Paget's store cupboard. It appears that he did; and if anybody supposes that his good lady had any twinges of conscience about that tea, then he knows not the perfect unscrupulousness of women in smuggling pretty things to wear and nice things to eat and drink. Observe that, as a naval officer, Captain Paget was peculiarly bound by law and Admiralty orders to support the King's custom officers, and to help to enforce the payment of dues. And there he was, smuggling in the King's ship. We may be very sure that Mrs Paget saw no harm in it all, and that if she told her friends how she got the tea, they just envied her luck in having a naval officer for a husband. And this was the price which the State paid



for the advantage of delegating part of its duties to a privileged company, and for imposing excessive customs dues.

The list of companies designed to act in America is long indeed, and France contributed by far the larger part. But a large proportion of this muster roll is mere paper strength. What was done for commerce or colonisation by the piously named "Compagnie de la Nacelle de Saint Pierre fleurdelisée"—Company of the Bark of Saint Peter with the Lilies? It was founded in Brittany in 1627, and it never succeeded in getting itself organised. In other words, it remained a mere paper project. And there were others which went no further than this, or very little. Yet the mere name of this Company *in nubibus* has a certain significance. The bark of Saint Peter is the Christian Church, which to all Frenchmen, except the Huguenots who were shut out from French colonies, meant the Holy Roman, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The lily was the emblem of the Virgin Mary, and of the Most Christian Kings of France. The combination of the bark and the lily typified the union of the Crown of France and the Church for the purpose of spreading orthodox doctrine in America. Under pretence of being a colonising or trading company, it was to be a missionary enterprise controlled by some religious confraternity or order. That is probably the chief reason why it did not attract investors, and so could not attain to getting itself organised. The attempt to combine two such different, though not necessarily hostile, purposes as the pursuit of profit and missionary zeal was not likely to lead to good. And there was a great deal too much of it in the early times of French settlement in Canada. The double-minded man, or company, is unstable in all his, or its, ways. Nothing is more distracting or more barren than the whirl

of rivalry, combination and separation, rise and fall, of the companies of Canada, of the Beaver, of Acadia, of New France, of the Hundred Partners. The companies, as companies, did little for France in North America. Whatever was achieved must be put to the credit of daring explorers of the stamp of Samuel Champlain, of King's officers, naval and military, and of the religious orders. One after another, all these companies fell under direct royal control. Not one of them had anything like the long and prosperous career of our own Hudson's Bay Company.

It is a fact which is significant of much, that this Company of ours was brought into existence by the enterprise of two Frenchmen. Pierre Esprit Radisson of St Malo in Brittany, and Medard Chouart, who styled himself *Sieur des Groseilliers*—*i.e.* gooseberry bushes, from a piece of land he bought near Quebec—who came from Meaux. Radisson had always been, and Groseilliers became, a Huguenot. There was therefore no sure future for them in a French colony. They might slip in while the settlement was young, but their chance of being left to prosper in peace would diminish in exact proportion to the improvement in the organisation and the increasing solidarity of the control exercised by the Church and the King. The two were closely connected, not only by friendship but by marriage, for Groseillier had married Radisson's sister, and by their common Protestantism. They had taken to the life of the backwoods, and had roamed to north and north-west. Whether they reached the shores of Hudson's Bay or not is a disputed point. It is also, as are many excuses for argument, of no importance whatever. The Bay and the road thither by sea were sufficiently well known. If the brothers-in-law had been allowed to follow out their own ideas, they would

not have been under any necessity to turn to Hudson's Bay. Experience had convinced them that the fur trade might be worked in north and north-west with profit, and on a more extended scale. They stated their views to the authorities at Quebec, and were snubbed. That might have befallen them in any case, but it was all the more likely to happen to them because Radisson was a Huguenot, and Groseillier, who had begun as a servant of the Jesuit missionaries, had espoused the religion together with the sister of his partner. Finding that they had little or nothing to hope from their own countrymen, they turned to England. These two had something of the exile for religion's sake about them, but more of the soldier of fortune, who will fight, and well too, for his pay and allowances, but when they fail, sees no reason why he should not seek another, and a better, master. The world had long been full of them, and every war in our own time has produced examples of the type. It is clear enough that they were quite ready to use an English connection for the purpose of making French authorities understand that it would be wise to buy them off. They went to and fro between London and Paris, and tried what could be done with Colbert. Radisson, who appears to have been the moving spirit, did first serve England, then go over to his own countrymen in Canada, then go back to the English. Their merits and demerits, their doings and sufferings, have a human interest. But they did not decide what was to be done.

When, in 1655, Radisson visited London at the suggestion of Sir George Carteret, Treasurer of the Navy, who had met him in America, the enterprising young Frenchman—he was born in 1636—fell into a society which was very well inclined to listen to any promising scheme he had to

propound. The Restoration of King Charles II had been followed by a great stir of activity in company-promoting for trade and colonisation. The King himself was of active intelligence, interested in whatever looked new and ingenious. His brother James, Duke of York, loved, if not business, then the routine and air of business. Both were the more disposed to favour projectors when they were offered the chance of receiving dividends. They were quite as ready to advance the fur trade as to join in the slave trade with the Guinea Company. And there were many men about them who had the same leanings. No man had them more effectively than their cousin, Prince Rupert. He was the best inclined of all men to promote a bold adventure. Had he not, during the Second Civil War, roamed from the West of Ireland to Portugal and the Mediterranean, thence to the west coast of Africa and over to the Antilles, and back to Europe on a voyage of very thinly veiled piracy?

It was a matter of course that, when Radisson appeared with a scheme for tapping the profits of the French peltry trade in Canada, by turning its flank on the Hudson Bay's side and getting on its lines of communication, he was welcomed with prompt adhesion. The peltry, or fur trade, offered a prospect of good profits, and then in a continent so rich in the precious metals as America, there was always a hope that gold and silver might be found while you were trading for skins. Investors came eagerly forward at Court, and on 2nd May 1670 the King granted the desired charter to "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England, trading to Hudson's Bay," called for short the Hudson's Bay Company. This instrument was naturally drawn on the well-known model, and it magnificently



granted about a quarter of North America to the adventurers, with the usual monopoly. Prince Rupert, the Duke of York, and Lord Churchill, the future Duke of Marlborough, were the first three Governors. The board was rich in members of the best society, and there were business men who did the work.

For a generation or so the Company flourished sufficiently to enable it to continue to be a society pet. It paid dividends of 50 per cent., and could make fairly handsome gifts to monarchs—to Charles, to James, and then in the changes of things, to William III, who headed the country when it drove out the former Duke of York. After a time the glory departed, the shares fell in value, and the Company settled down to a prosaic but lucrative business of bartering guns, powder, bullets, laced coats, kettles, and so forth, for furs. What else was there it could do? Its domain was a region of months of ice-bound winter and brief intervals of sudden heat. There were here no principalities and cities—only the forest and the river, and wild red men. Yet there was one short interval of war. The activity of the Hudson's Bay Company did, as was inevitable, inflict some loss on the French fur trade. The Indians were drawn to the north—as we perhaps rather complacently think, by the better treatment they met from our traders than from the French. It is to be feared that a perfectly honest statement of the case would compel an admission of the fact that the red man much preferred the Englishman's rum to the Frenchman's brandy, as being more rapid and effectual in its operation. Here, as in the Carnatic, the French took to the sword in order to protect and extend their market.

During the war of the reign of William III, Le Moyne d'Iberville, one of the most brilliant of French explorers

and fighters, and certainly one of the most amiable, came into Hudson's Bay and fell with destructive effect on the Company's vessels and posts. When peace was made, the French seemed to be masters all round the Bay, and the Company held only a single post. But here, as in the East Indies, they were dancing in a net. The fate of the English Company was not decided on the spot, but in the continent of Europe and at sea. When Louis XIV was defeated and forced to make the Peace of Utrecht, the Company was replaced in possession of all it had lost, and of more. Its later history was for long peaceful and profitable; but it was an affair of barter with the Indians, which does not make a story to be told, but a way of life to be described. The Company could do little to promote colonisation. The country did not lend itself to settlement. It was certainly far less attractive than regions further to the south in America, or than the Cape. How far that was the case was shown by the fate of Lord Selkirk's colony on the Red River. Its period of conflict with the rival North West Company, founded in 1783, and the coalition of the two in 1821, were episodes of no considerable importance except locally. With the growth of Canada under British rule, and the decay of the fur trade at least in relative importance, the day was bound to come when the Company would have outlived its time. It was naturally absorbed by Canada in 1870. The work it had done was to hold a vast territory for the British Empire till the day dawned when it could be used for other and far greater purposes than a fur trade.

## CONCLUSION

THERE is one lesson which is most clearly taught by the history of the Great Chartered Company. It is that such a body could play a considerable part in the world on two conditions only. The one was that it was the offspring of a vigorous and expanding nationality. The other was that it was lawfully entitled to act and speak for a government which had not the means to exercise its authority by its own officers and forces in remote seas and lands. When that is accepted as an accurate statement of the case, as it surely must, then nothing can be more certain than that the modern world affords no opening for another East India Company.

Jocular observers have been known to assert that whenever a disturbance took place in the most remote island in the Pacific, the next thing which happened was that a British man-of-war sailed in, dropped anchor, squared her yards, and, looking round, inquired whether anybody was to be brought to order. And this is in sober reality a statement of what either was, or might easily have been, the literal truth at any time after the Peace of Utrecht in 1712 left the British Navy not only without an equal, but almost without a second on the sea. But when the authority of the mother State could be swiftly and universally exercised, it was no longer possible that Honourable Companies should be left to rule, negotiate, and frequently fight at their own costs and hazards.

Governments in Europe did not show alacrity in assuming full responsibility for the protection and control of their subjects far away. We have seen that Charles II handed Bombay over to the East India Company, and the port remained in the hands of the governor and directors for generations. It is true that the transfer was not effected quite without difficulty. Some of King Charles's servants were more royalist than their King. One of them, by name George Keigwin, took upon himself to hold the town for the Crown. Keigwin's rebellion so-called was much more comic than tragic. The man was not a ferocious rebel, and there were questions of pay and allowances mixed up with the principles. A judicious outlay of money had a share in restoring order. Keigwin's excess of zeal manifestly did him no harm at home. He was again employed in the navy, and made a good end, for he was killed in honourable warfare at the Basseterre of St Kits in the West Indies early in the war of William III's reign. We may consider that his adventure did point to the existence among Englishmen of a belief that what was ceded to the King ought to remain with the Crown. The British Government, inspired by that genius for laying the head of the sow to the tail of the grice, of rubbing along with what already existed, would just do, and was for the time being convenient and economical, which is our peculiar glory and the explanation of a good half of our success in the world, left the Company to get on as it best could with Bombay. Only step by step, as need demanded and occasion served, did the State intervene in the East with squadrons, soldiers, and Acts of Parliament. No other people has ever done anything quite like it. The lack of logic and of *situation nette* in the whole makeshift would have driven Frenchmen distracted. The British



Government, with its customary sublime disregard of logic, went on with a constantly more compromising-making compromise, company in name, but even more government office in fact, which answered magnificently. How and when the personification known as John Company came into use seems to be by no means certain. There have been differences of opinion as to whether the "John" is the Christian name, or is a corruption of the word "joint" applied to the United Royal and Parliamentary Companies, but as the Dutch Company was also known as "Jan" (or John) Kompanie, there can be no connection with "joint." "John Bull," "Jack Tar," and the Dutch "Jan Pikbroek" may well have helped to provide the Christian name and surname.

The progress and end of our Company in its character of trading corporation differs in one way from the history of its rivals, the Dutch and the French. They vanished bodily, but the political and administrative functions of the British "E.I.C." outlived the trading monopoly. Little or even very little is heard of the "interloper" after the combination of Queen Anne's time was fully formed. The joint company was no longer by name a London monopoly, though the trade had been so thoroughly concentrated and organised in London that other ports could not have competed with any chance of success. Moreover, those of them which might have had the necessary resources—Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow—had a monopoly of their own. The navigation laws gave them the possession of the business of import and export which was to be done with the American colonies and the West Indies. It is true that London shared with them. The American and West Indian commerce borne on the "London River" was about equal to the East Indian. But

quite enough was left to allow Bristol to flourish, and Liverpool and Glasgow to grow rich. So the outports were not provoked to poach on the Company's preserves.

It was not in the nature of things that the Company's monopoly should never have been resented or assailed. We know that it was. Adam Smith attacked it with vigour, and so did the school of economists he founded. Defenders were not likely to fail, and they did indeed come forward in large numbers. Their arguments have nowadays an appearance of futility. We can see that since the trade to India has been thrown open to private enterprise, it has flourished exceedingly. Thousands of ships, most of them larger than the largest of the Company's Indiamen, now pour along the trade route on which it sent out or brought home but fifty or sixty keels a year. All the old arguments—to use a polite phrase for what, in truth, were only round assertions—which had done duty for the Muscovy and Eastland Companies were again solemnly paraded. The trade was so peculiar that no man could succeed in it without a long apprenticeship, which he must needs serve in the Company; private traders would be unable to resist the temptation to overstock the market and ruin business, and so on. The test of experience has been applied, and all these bugbears have been dissolved into smoke. Little by little, under the pressure of opinion and necessity, the Company was forced to make concessions to the private trader, and every one of them strengthened the hands of its critics. In 1813, when its charter was renewed, the monopoly of the trade with India was taken away.

The exclusive right to the trade with China was left to it for twenty years. Free merchants settled in India could, and did, share in the port-to-port trade, but commerce with

Europe was reserved to the Company. This exception to freedom of trade with the Far East was not without justification. The conditions which had rendered the privileges of the Company in the seventeenth century fair and advantageous, prevailed for some years after 1813 in the China Sea. The British Government had sent embassies to the Emperor of China, but had not been allowed to establish permanent direct relations with him. In 1813, and for some years afterwards, we were not prepared to assume new responsibilities, so the duty of representing Great Britain in China was left to the Company. At Canton, to which the Manchu sovereigns of China had confined all foreign trade, the Company could speak by the mouths of its agents, who were supported by the yearly presence of big and well-armed Indiamen. A not irrational *modus vivendi* was arranged between the pressure of foreigners eager to enter, and the timid, but obstinate, reluctance of the Chinese to consent to a disturbing intrusion. The British Company spoke for all foreigners, for the Americans who were now coming into the Eastern seas, and for the Dutch who ranked next to us in the trade. Our common interest was so serious that when in 1811 the British Government was taking hold of Java, Commodore John Hayes, an officer of the Company, who was blockading Batavia, allowed two large junks which were carrying £600,000 worth of Dutch property to go on to Canton, though he was fully entitled to make prize of them. But he knew that by intercepting those junks he would cause embarrassment and loss to British trade at Canton. Therefore he sacrificed many thousand pounds of prize money which he himself would have pocketed. That was a most magnanimous and public-spirited action on the part of Commodore John Hayes. It also shows the strength of the

common interest which bound all Europeans who were inside the Bogue, which is a corruption of Bocca Tigris, the Portuguese name for the entry to the Canton River.

The British Company had to deal with a Chinese corporation set up to talk with it at the gate by the Emperor—the Co-Hong. The relations between the two were rather complicated, but they have been described as gentlemanly, at least at times. The two monopolists, being safe against competition, could afford to be handsome in their personal relations. Yet, though there is no reason why a man of business should not behave like a gentleman, commerce is most wholesomely conducted on business principles. The time came when the expanding trade of the world could no longer breathe in the mould provided for it at Canton by the Company and the Co-Hong. In 1833 the British Company's monopoly was taken away, and then began the history of the direct relations of European governments with the Chinese Empire. We have not to touch on that—its last chapter is not yet written, and will not be for many a day.

There would be an unpardonable omission in this book if no mention were made of the Company's shipping. When dealing with it as a whole, a distinction must be made between "the Company's Marine Service" and "the Bombay Marine." They have been too often confused. The Bombay Marine was the navy of the Company, and corresponded to the white regiments of its army on one side and to the sepoy force on another. It was European in its organisation, and largely in the nationality of its crews, but drew on native sailors—Lascars and Seedy Boys. The Company created it to protect its trade against pirates on the coasts of Malabar and Macran, in the Persian Gulf and



the Red Sea. The sea officers of His Majesty's Navy were much in the habit of speaking of the Bombay Marine in a too sniffing tone. It was "all Bombay Marine" or "the Bombay Buccaneers." Yet before it came formally to an end in 1830, the service did much good and gallant work in surveying and in fighting. The Company's Marine Service corresponded to the Covenanted Service ashore. It consisted of the captains, officers, and crews of the Indiamen who carried the trade from and to Europe. They went armed, and did not a little fighting. When the war with Napoleon was renewed after the breach of the Peace of Amiens, a squadron of these armed traders, commanded by Commodore Dance, beat off an attack made on it by the French Admiral Linois with a line of battle-ship and several frigates.

When the last remnant of the Company's monopoly disappeared, the officers of the Marine Service considered themselves, very reasonably, as an organised body with rights of which they could not be justly deprived without compensation. They said that a history of about two hundred years lay behind them, and they might well have added thirty. James Lancaster, who commanded the Company's first voyage, stands at the head of an unbroken succession of "generals," "commodores," captains, and lesser officers. *Ni jamais, ni toujours* is a good shrewd French maxim, and it is rash to affirm that anything you find recorded is unique. But if the like of the East India Company's marine service did exist at any time or in any country, no mention of it has come in my way. The Company, as has been recorded, began by entrusting the command rather to the merchant than to the man bred to the sea. But this was an arrangement which could last only while there were

no established factories ashore, and while the superior authority was bound to remain afloat. As establishments were secured in Eastern ports, and a regular staff with Cape Merchants, Chief Factors or Presidents, at the head arose, these business men, who had the whole work of collecting and embarking cargoes in their hands, began to resent the claims of the commanders at sea to control them. The sea authorities were, naturally enough, unwilling to surrender their old position of superiority. Out of the conflict between the two came a definition of functions, one of those specialisations which arises in every growing organism as it develops and solidifies. The factors became a separate body, and the captains were limited to "sea cases," *i.e.* the navigation of their ships. It is not necessary to labour to prove that the difference was not marked in a day. Of course it arose in time, and by use and wont. Men who had commanded ships were appointed to be heads of factories. But though the persons were the same, the functions were separate, and were not entrusted at the same time to one officer.

The Marine Service could afford to be satisfied with its own sphere. It is true that in the mere matter of pay their work was not magnificently rewarded. The amounts of salaries remained stationary or increased very little, or even sank, between the beginning of the seventeenth and the end of the eighteenth century. But then the Company gave "encouragements" and "indulgences." Both corresponded to the licence for "private trade" given to the factors as a set-off to their wretched pay. An "encouragement" was a sum given as a reward, once paid, for services or wounds. An "indulgence" was a grant to the ship's company of the right to profit by a stated portion of the ship's tonnage,

which could either be hired out for freight, or loaded with a private venture. Need it be added that the "indulgence" was apportioned with a proper regard for rank. The ninety-seven tons allowed on a voyage out or home were distributed on the scale of fifty-six to the captain and officers "of the quarter-deck," and the balance to all the other members of the crew. When out in the East, two-fifths of the tonnage were allowed as indulgence, and when the Company had no occasion for the other three, the officers and crew were allowed to bid for them, and make use of them for speculations of their own. The trader and the seamen were much interwoven in the "Marine Service." His pay was a minor—a very minor—consideration to an officer, or even a sailor. By judicious purchases, and with the help of good luck, a captain, it is said, had been known to win as much as £30,000 in a single voyage out, then from port to port, then homeward bound, which would employ eighteen months. This, if there ever was so fortunate a skipper, was a most exceptional case. Yet we have the trustworthy evidence of captains to show that it was considered usual for one of them to earn as much as £18,000 in three voyages of eighteen months each. And the passenger traffic was another source of profit to the captain at least. And all were rationed lavishly. The first mate's allowance for wine and beer was twenty-four dozen bottles for the voyage.

As for the ships themselves, they were secured in various ways. The first, we know, were bought from the Earl of Cumberland and Alderman Banyng. Then the Company found that it was asked outrageous sums, and took to building for itself in its own dockyard. Then in the evil days of the middle seventeenth century, it was forced to

recognise that too much of its capital was locked up in the yard, and it fell back on hiring again. One can make out that some of the directors took advantage of their position to obtain a monopoly of the supply, and to fleece the other shareholders. When the joint company was formed about 1708, Parliament made rules to stop this abuse by forbidding directors to supply vessels. In the eighteenth century (if not in our times) they were poor men of business who could not get round an Act of Parliament. A practice arose by which a particular marine interest was allowed to secure the right of building ships which the Company bound itself to hire at stipulated rates. Moreover, the persons who supplied one ship had a vested right to be asked to build the next. Hence arose what were known by the odd-sounding name of "hereditary bottoms." A regular revolt on the part of the less favoured shareholders was required to break down this monopoly within a monopoly in 1796. Of course all charges for building, freight, etc., were far higher than they would have been if the trade to India had been open.

The number of Indiamen varied, inevitably, from one time to another. At the close of the eighteenth century, in 1793, when the Company's fleet was at its best and greatest, the number of vessels estimated as being necessary to do the Company's work was thirty-six of the 1200-ton class, and forty of the 800 tonners. These seventy-six were certainly, on the average, larger than the Indiamen of an earlier generation. But what their real size was if measured by the rules in force to-day is a question I would be sorry to have to answer. A good deal of make-believe and of downright camouflage went into the measurements of the eighteenth century. It was notorious that one of the



Company's 1200 tonners was as large—that is, displaced as much water—as a three-decked line of battle-ship, which was estimated at 2250 tons or thereabouts. If you look over *Hardy's Register* you will see one after another classed as of exactly 499 tons. It is, of course, absurd that a number of ships should be each exactly one ton short of five hundred. But the explanation of this apparent nonsense is that a ship of 500 tons and upwards was required by law to carry a chaplain. So, many were officially registered below their true size to avoid that expense. Then, as light and port dues were levied by tonnage, the shipowners had a strong motive to understate the real size. And the system of measurement by length, beam, and half-beam lent itself to fraud. Ships could be built deep and with a great belly below the main beam, whereby the carrying capacity was increased at the expense of the seaworthiness. The Company, again according to *Hardy's Register*, lost 160 vessels by wreck or capture between 1700 and 1818. A high proportion of the loss is attributed to foundering.

This conclusion may well seem to have wandered a long way from the opening sentence, but it has remained in sight of the starting-point none the less. What has to be insisted on is that the Chartered Company, as an exploring, governing, and colonising body, has no real place in the modern world. The name has tempting associations, and during the later years of the reign of Queen Victoria there were attempts to revive the famous old brotherhoods. Experience has proved that the promoters were, in so far as they tried to make another East India or Virginia Company, acting as “romantics.” The name is taken here to stand for those who, being influenced by the memory of ancient things, make a deliberate attempt to revive them.

There are times when the romantics form a numerous and conspicuous body, but the net result of their exertions has ever been to produce a make-believe. Even when they have created a reality, their achievement is a modern thing bearing an ancient name.

It is obviously quite impossible to go now and here into the history of Rhodesia, which may be taken as the most conspicuous, and also the most genuine, of these contemporary revivals. The story is not yet ended, and it is full of matter of controversy. The "facts" which some quote are universally disputed by others. Without a clear call and ample space, who could think of going into the wrongs and rights of the story of Lobengula, or the Rudd-Rhodes Concession, or the Liphert Concession, and the decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Rhodesia Land case, etc., etc. But one thing is very certain. Whoever will take the trouble to read the charter granted in 1889 must see how far it differs in an essential point from those given at the beginning to the East India Companies, English and Dutch, or the others. It is full from first to last, in express statement and by implication, of control by the Government which grants the privilege. The Company is explicitly told that it must submit its actions and its administrative measures to the inspection of the Secretary of State continually. And this was bound to be so. Steam and the telegraph had brought the most remote regions nearer to London than was the North of Ireland in the days of James I. No government could now part with its authority as he could, and even could not but do. Can we conceive of a modern ruler telling the servants of a Chartered Company that His Majesty is well aware how usual it is for the subjects of all

princes who fall across one another when pursuing their adventures far away, to come to blows, and therefore he graciously assures them that they shall not be liable to be tried for piracy merely because they have taken a prize? King James gave that assurance over and over again as a matter of course. It never occurred to him nor to the States General to say that the protection of the natives was one of their duties. Now we all do.

When the conditions which allowed the great Chartered Companies to play the part they did no longer exist, neither can they except in name, and that is no subject for regret. Some of the companies did great feats, but even when the world was open to them, the failures were more numerous than the successes. Every company was liable to two evils. Being by its nature a monopoly, it aroused the enmity of all who wished to push their own fortunes within its sphere unchecked by its control. And then there was ever a possibility that it would in one way or another come into collision with its own government, as did the Virginia Company and some which arose from it. So much has been said of the conflicts which arose between English and Dutch and French in the East that it is quite superfluous to point out how likely they were to fight one another. In time, and in exact proportion to their success in becoming governing powers, they became open to a grave form of disaster. The cost of their governments ate up their profits as trading bodies, and then they were tempted to extort tribute as a means of paying dividends. Nothing is more odious, nor more likely to bring disgrace, than the exploitation of a weak population by a body of traders, who must needs look to the gaining of profits for the payment of the percentages expected by shareholders. The great achievement of the companies

which did truly conquer and possess was to prepare the way for the exercise of direct rule by the States to which they belonged. It was wonderful and unprecedented that bodies of traders should found empires, but it was not to be desired that they should be left to rule for ever what they had won.



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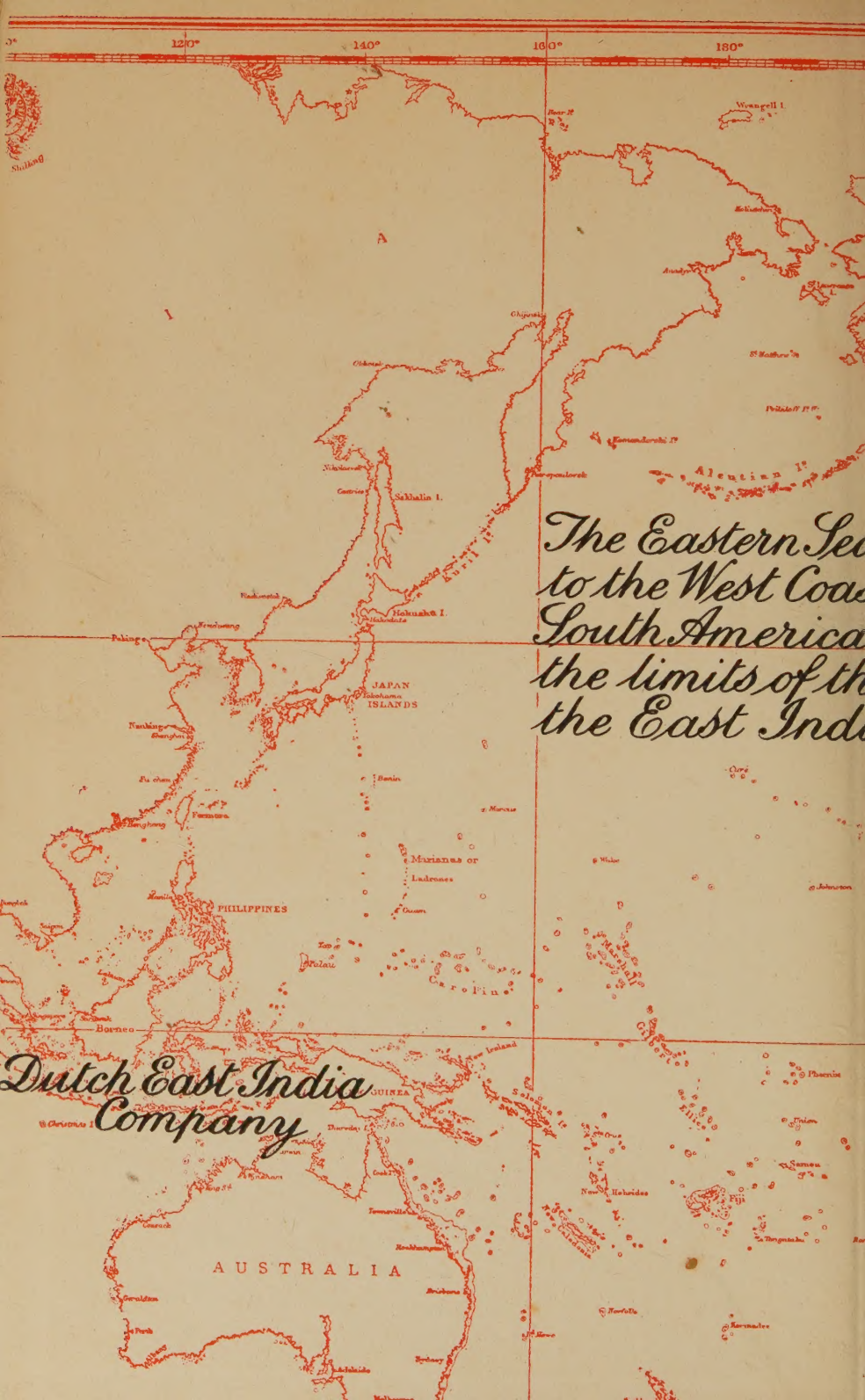
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